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ABSTRACT

The study of Youth Transition into the Labour Market (YTLM) began several years ago in the spring of 1987. The project consists of two parallel yet interrelated studies, one focusing on the full cohort of approximately 9000 Level III high school students in Newfoundland and Labrador at the end of the 1988-89 school year, and a second, which focuses on the full year cohort of 2109 students (grades seven to Level III) who dropped out of school between Easter 1987 and Easter 1988. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with 1274 of the 2109 early leavers. The early school leaver emerged as an enormously complex and idiosyncratic person. The early school leaver was frequently male, had experienced failure in school, was disenchanted with school, and had no sense of direction or vision of the future that extended beyond the limits of his immediate home and community. However, the early leaver was also often female, though few said that they left school because they were pregnant. High absenteeism was often reported. Most worked at temporary jobs when they worked. As a group the school leavers seemed to recognize value in education. Indeed, many expressed aspirations that implied a need to make an important commitment to extensive education and training. They had, nonetheless, rejected public education, first step in achieving their aspirations. (ABL)

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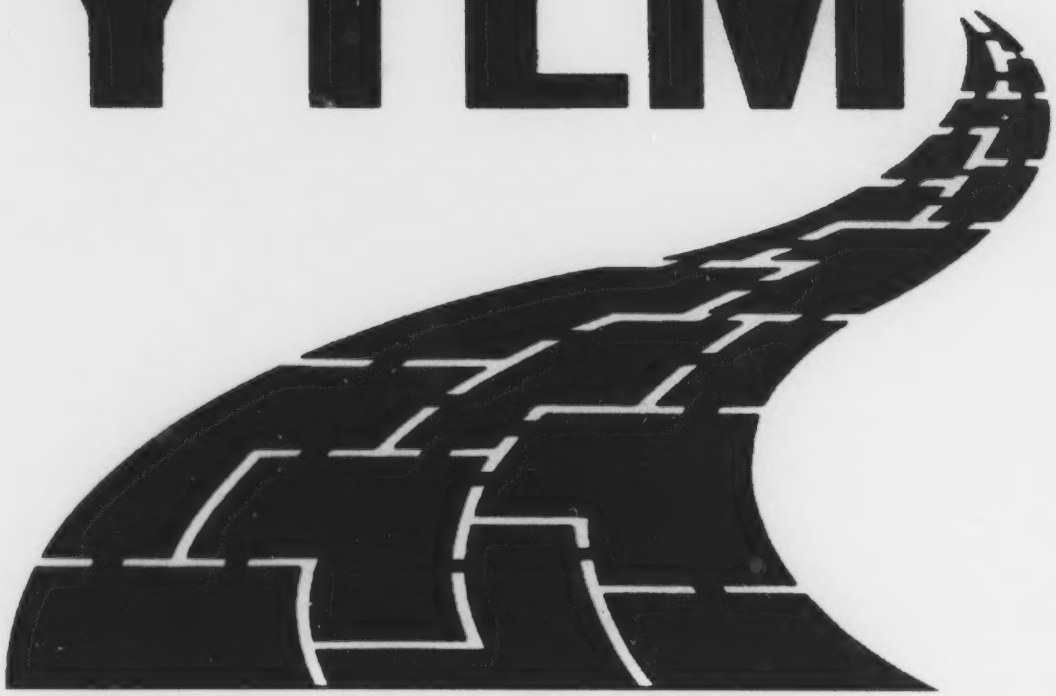
YOUTH TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

YTLM



THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS:

INITIAL SURVEY -- SUMMARY REPORT

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YOUTH TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

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INITIAL SURVEY -- SUMMARY REPORT

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Project sponsored by the
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education
and the Canada/Newfoundland Youth Employment Strategies Program

November 1990

PREFACE

The study of Youth Transition into the Labour Market began several years ago, in the spring of 1987. The Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies advertised for proposals to prepare a longitudinal study design of the transition of youth. The authors, then part of the Institute of Educational Research and Development, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, made a submission and were awarded the contract. A report was made that became the basis for YTLM, the Transition of Youth into the Labour Market. The Department and the Institute are no more, each the casualty of restructuring. Now the authors, members of the Centre for Educational Research and Development within the Faculty of Education, work on the project with the Newfoundland Department of Education. Funding is provided by the Canada/Newfoundland Youth Employment Strategies Program and the Department of Education.

The project consists of two parallel yet interrelated studies, one focusing on the full cohort of approximately 9000 Level III high school students at the end of the 1988-89 school year, and a second, which focuses on the full year cohort of 2109 students (grades seven to Level III) who dropped out of school between Easter 1987 and Easter 1988. So far, each cohort has been surveyed twice, and there are plans to survey each on two to three more occasions.

Throughout the past three years we have received the help of a large number of people with the project, as well as the cooperation and assistance of many Newfoundland school personnel, field interviewers, and of course, the early leavers themselves who endured an extensive interview process. In particular, we are indebted to Robert Thompson of the old Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies who originated the idea of the project, Gwen Brokenshire who organized the project data collection phase, Charlotte Strong for her work on the initial early leavers report, Kelly Brocklehurst for the word processing and graphics, and also for the work of Sarah Barron for the overall production of this summary document which addresses the findings of the initial survey on early school leavers.

The main report is available and further information may be obtained by contacting the authors at: Centre for Educational Research and Development, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, (709) 737-3506/7549

INTRODUCTION

This report, the first in a series to be based on the Youth Transition into the Labour Market study, deals with the high school dropout, the *early school leaver*. Its focus is on the early leavers at the time of school leaving. It describes some of the reasons for leaving, the aspirations and plans of the leavers at the time, and some of their perspectives on the economic context. Early school leaving has been a central educational issue in the province for many years, but never more so since the report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (1986) which targeted the early school leaver as a critical barrier to be overcome in the province's drive toward economic recovery.

There is some evidence that early school leaving has been reduced in recent years, to perhaps as low as 25% of all persons enroled. There is no reason to be optimistic, however, as the experience of larger and wealthier provinces such as Ontario will attest. From reports of dropout rates of over 30% in these provinces, it may be possible that the decrease that this province has experienced has "bottomed," and that further improvement will come only with a new approach to the question.

The decision to leave secondary school early can be made by students at any time after they reach the age of sixteen. Its causes must be viewed in terms of factors both internal and external to the school. There is evidence of a substantial dropout rate beginning in grade seven and continuing throughout the entire secondary school cycle.

The nature of search for educational and work opportunities before and after dropping out is also an important, and presently unanswered, question. The problems confronted by secondary school leavers are enormous. Essentially lacking even the basic skills required to equip them to deal with a modern job market, their options appear limited to the adoption of traditional and contrived patterns of work; patterns that are disappearing through technological change, or because of changing political attitudes. An important aspect of this study will be the description of the life of the person after leaving school and a detailing of job search.

Newfoundland's economic history is one of failed attempts to establish an industrialized society and, although having some comparative advantage, relatively unsuccessful attempts to stabilize its primary resource sectors of mining, fishing, and forestry. The province has the lowest labour force participation rate in Canada, the highest unemployment rate, and the highest youth unemployment rate.

It is within this context that youth make, or may attempt to make, some form of transition into the labour market. Individual choice establishes the pattern of work transition. A decision to stay in school is considered to be evidence of a more adaptive career pattern than a decision to leave school early because it is assumed that people with more education and training will be more adaptive to a wider range of employment opportunities. But, achieving societal standards of work transition must be understood from the perspective of individual goal satisfaction and its effects on choice. Within the larger study of work transition, critical decision points such as early school leaving demand close examination. Early school leaving should be understood from both societal and individual perspectives. This first report on early school leavers examines some of these perspectives.

The data were obtained in interviews with 1274 early school leavers. These people represented all of those who could be reached by the YTLM staff from the 2109 early leavers who were identified by the administrators of 341 of the Province's schools as having left school between Easter, 1987 and Easter 1988.

SURVEY RESULTS

THE DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

The Early School Leaver

The early school leaver in Newfoundland and Labrador has emerged as an enormously complex and idiosyncratic person. School leavers have often been stereotyped and these stereotypes were seen in the analysis. The early leaver was frequently male, had experienced failure in school, was disenchanted with school and had no sense of direction or vision of the future that extended beyond the limits of his immediate home and community. Schools often reported high absenteeism for early leavers. Most leavers worked at temporary jobs when they worked, and they aspired to work that was traditional in their home areas.

There was some variation from the stereotype. Many early leavers were female, though few said they left school because they were pregnant. Some leavers had very definite ideas of where they wanted to go in life. A number had worked hard and continuously since school leaving. A significant number very quickly moved from home and the province.

The early leaver, we found, was a paradox. As a group, they seemed to recognize value in education. Indeed, some expressed aspirations that implied a need to make an important commitment to extensive education and training. Nonetheless, they had rejected public education, the first step in achieving their aspirations. Our challenge, as a society, is to understand this paradox, for it reflects on us, and our way of thinking about education and its role in our lives. Early school leavers are a very significant part of our society. In several ways, they reflect all our values, hopes and aspirations. Their problem, if that is what it is, must be seen as a problem of the society-at-large.

The early leaver's problem confronts everyone of school-leaving age, without exception. Each one must assess their school experience as they make decisions about the future and the role their education will play. Each one is bombarded with opinions on appropriate decisions, entitlements, the futures of their communities and political rhetoric about the economy. We all live in environments that teach us survival skills and corresponding perspectives on how education relates to those skills. Through all of this, all students must shape a direction that will have satisfying results for them, results that are not necessarily defined in terms of long-term career objectives, or attendance at school.

Reasons

The decision to leave school involves a broad spectrum of reasons. People leaving school express these reasons in widely differing ways, and it would be wrong to simplify the process. By far the largest set of reasons given by early leavers related directly to their perception of their educational experience (See Fig. 1). Many of the other reasons offered make sense when viewed from this perspective.

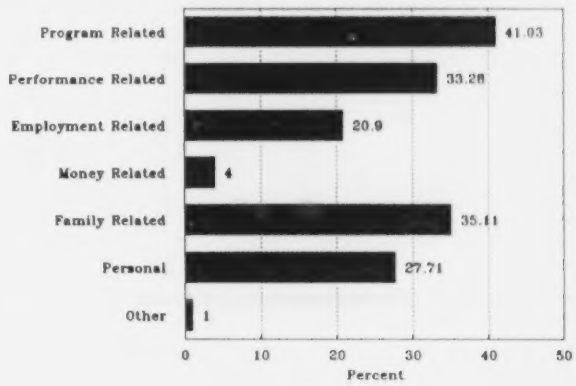


Figure 1
Reasons for school leaving

There were many leavers who stated that they saw no purpose or relevance to the school experience. More commonly, our respondents complained that school was uninteresting. The school's perspective on this was that the leavers lacked interest. Money, and the desire to become wage-earners, was at the heart of reasons given by others. However, there was little evidence that genuine financial need was a problem. Most of the leavers received financial support from their parents and continued this dependency after leaving school.

Some leavers said that they were needed at home. A few of the women said they were pregnant and that was why they left. These responses represent only a few of the many pregnancies reported for women in this age group. Perhaps a few pregnancies were the true reasons among those who reported illness, or personal reasons for leaving (more common for the women than the men). However, the schools were usually able to confirm the number of women actually leaving because of pregnancies. This information represents a change from the Early Leaving Report of the Denominational Education Committees (1984), which targeted pregnancy as a major cause of school leaving. We have no evidence that the number of teen-age pregnancies has dropped. Rather, this information suggests that the more enlightened approach of schools in recent years towards young women in this situation, and perhaps a change in societal attitudes, has made pregnancy a less compelling reason to leave school. This requires us to look beyond pregnancy to explain why women make the decision to leave.

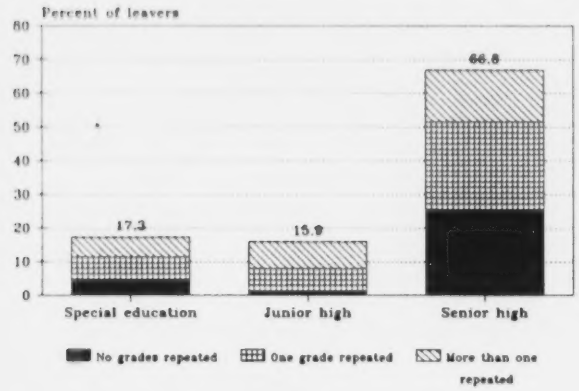


Figure 2
Number of grades repeated by school level at time of leaving

School Failure

Most early leavers had experienced failure sometime in their school experience (See Fig. 2). This confirms a stereotype, of course, but failure, especially if it occurred earlier in the school experience, does not seem to be the real issue. Very few of the leavers we interviewed left school after a successful school year. The data are not entirely clear on this point, and further analysis needs to be done, but at this time, the success of the immediate school experience seems to be a point to focus upon. As long as they were successful beyond school-leaving age, most leavers stayed in school. However, school programming which focuses on encouraging success to the detriment of education may miss the point. This issue is addressed later in the discussion of Level III leavers.

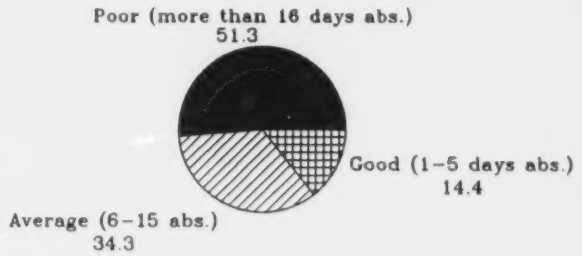


Figure 3
Record of attendance of early leavers

A pattern of absenteeism was described for many leavers the year of school leaving, and it is easy to attribute the lack of success that year to absenteeism (See Fig. 3). It is possible, however, that absenteeism is a consequence of a developing intent to leave. The lack of success in the same year could be as much a consequence of the same intent to leave as it could be a consequence of deficiencies in the schools' programs.

School Organization and Its Relationship to School Leaving.

During the sampling process, there appeared to be fewer than usual reports of school leaving from schools organized K-seven and K-eight. There was also a large increase of school leavers beginning in Level I. This is evidence that transition between schools is a problem and should be followed up.

A number of factors associated with school type could contribute to these observations. The practice of social promotion, in which students are passed into a higher grade despite grade failure may be a factor explaining the difference. Social promotion relates to the makeup and changes in the peer group, a very important part of life to people at this age.

A consistent promotion policy is more likely to occur in certain school organization such as K-seven and K-eight. Changes in promotion policy from one school to another could result in difficult transitions. Differences in instructional style, course content and the need to form relationships with new teachers and administrators are also factors that could be important.

Significance of School

There is some evidence that while public education, specifically high school, has been rejected by early school leavers, they do nonetheless value education and training. The issue may lie in their perception of the educational experience, how it relates to their lives and its relevance to them.

Early leavers expressed a willingness to use the school and consult teachers and counsellors on a variety of educational issues; but few leavers said they consulted school personnel about the decision to leave. In effect, it seemed that although school did have a place in their lives, it did not have a role to play in the business of leaving itself. For the early school leavers, leaving was an issue with broader implications. They either dealt with the decision themselves, as befitted their approaching adult status, or consulted their parents--who were obviously considered best suited to help assess the full import of the decision.

Understandably, schools will have a biased viewpoint in a discussion about their relevance to the lives of individuals. In the rural areas, it is only in recent years that school has had a significant role to play in the career maturing of most people. It is still developing its role in many cases, and for some people the options that schools provide are largely unfamiliar. In many cases schooling will take the person out of the community, perhaps permanently. This is in contrast to past experience where people who did work outside of the community were usually employed temporarily and at jobs that could be learned locally.

Motivation

Motivation is a key issue in the reasons cited by both schools and leavers for the decision to drop out. School officials in over half the cases of school leavers marked down lack of interest as the reason for leaving. But students themselves frequently described the school programs they were leaving as uninteresting or not relevant. It is important to construe motivation correctly. Pedagogues frequently view motivation in terms of interest in the content, and thus define motivation as an instructional problem in developing interest in the matter at hand. The problem is deeper than this. If school is not seen to be relevant, it will be difficult for teachers to create interest, and this is assuming that it is possible to make the learning tasks interesting to begin with. Some necessary tasks in school may also be dull and uninteresting. This is no different than other learning environments, such as working with someone on the job. This on-the-job learning environment was preferred by the early leavers (See Fig. 4). But there too, skills are often mastered through monotonous tasks, by rote, and repetition. Teachers, both in school and on the job, are well advised to make such tasks more engaging, but in the last analysis, skill is best acquired by the person who is prepared to stick to the task. This element of motivation is clearly more elusive as it implies a self-knowledge and direction which is not always clear to those of school-leaving age.

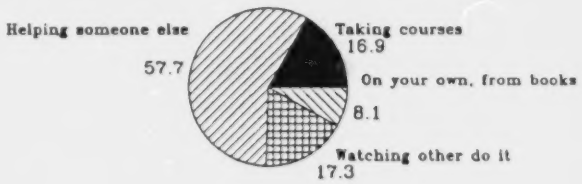


Figure 4
Early leavers' preferred learning style

An approach frequently applied to the problem of engaging the learner who appears at risk in the school is to make the learning "practical" by moving it into realistic job environments, or linking it directly to the type of work the person might be doing. Such approaches tend to work best

with specific skills and, thus far, they have been applied to areas related to vocational skill development. Interestingly enough, the approach is also applied to very young children just learning to read. Imbedding instruction in the immediate experience of children seems to help considerably in facilitating learning to read, in developing memory skills and so forth. This approach seems to work less well with much of the content (math, social studies, science) taught in upper levels of the school: content which is seen to be necessary if one is to move into the mainstream economy of the future, wherever it is located and whatever form it takes.

It is evident that the relevance of what is being taught is confounded with the way that it is taught. Practical and immediate outcomes can be achieved through direct application. But, the more "generic," generalizable outcomes and skill development are often more remote and less evidently relevant to an individual. These tasks may best be learned in the classroom, away from settings where they can be applied. As the learning tasks addressed become more akin to the direct experience of the person in the community, the need for school becomes less evident, and the reasons for staying in school less clear.

This is a social and cultural phenomenon. If it is seen as a problem (as it has been), it is a social problem. The school may be part of the solution, and may even be the focus of the solution, but most probably the school cannot provide the full solution. The solution must be addressed at the social and political level as well as at the educational level. There is every reason to believe that by the time a student can be reliably identified at risk for early leaving, it is already too late for the school to alter the outcome. In fact, schools would probably be criticized if they targeted younger children on a more speculative basis. The emergence of the pattern of lower achievement, absenteeism and alienation are likely signals that motivation for school is low. We believe that this motivation is socially derived. For the school, the area of focus would appear to be in the transition from the more basic skill development of the lower grades to the more advanced content of the higher grades.

The problem is enormous. Young children must be provided with experiences of a world that is foreign to them in such a way that this world appears accessible and desirable. They need to be prepared to entertain massive change in their lives as a matter of course. The necessity for this change has to be confronted and accepted in the family, in society, at the political level and in the schools.

EARLY LEAVER GROUPS

Special School Programs

The study encountered some difficulty in dealing with the issue of special education and work study programs. These are programs that schools have implemented to deal with the perceived special needs of some students. The nature of these needs is not all that clearly defined, but generally it has to do with low school achievement and its relationship to exceptionality of one sort or another. To some extent, these programs are also seen as a way that schools can help persons who are potentially early school leavers by preparing them specifically to enter the workforce. The main point is that the students involved are treated as exceptional.

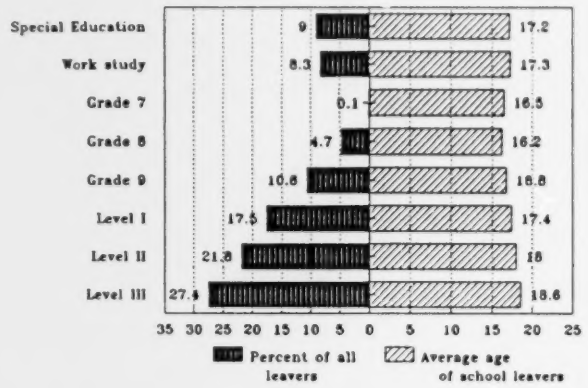


Figure 5
Grade by age at school leaving

Despite this, our evidence is that students in special programs were quite persistent in school as a group (See Fig.5). They did eventually leave school, but generally at a point beyond school-leaving age and from programs that would not lead to graduation from public school in any case. Rather than a diploma, they were eligible for School Leaving

Certificates. Since the people in our study had been named as early leavers, it may be assumed that they did not achieve even this status.

While the policies are better now than they used to be, placement in these programs is generally initiated by school authorities. Thus, it is obvious that attaining a diploma and avoiding being classified as a dropout is a socially and politically based objective that has been imposed rather arbitrarily on the student. It may be that the flexibility shown in the case of the special education and work study students demonstrates a need to rethink the entire structure of education and the ways that people can move through the system.

Summer Leavers

The people who made the decision to leave school during the summer were a very interesting group and require further study and analysis (See Fig. 6). Most made the decision to leave after what was apparently an unsuccessful year (See Fig.7). They differed from those who returned to school following an unsuccessful school year: but, as yet, there is no indication why this is so. This implies a fundamental difference in the two groups of leavers that goes beyond school success.

The programming implications for the two groups are quite different. For the persistent group, providing or facilitating

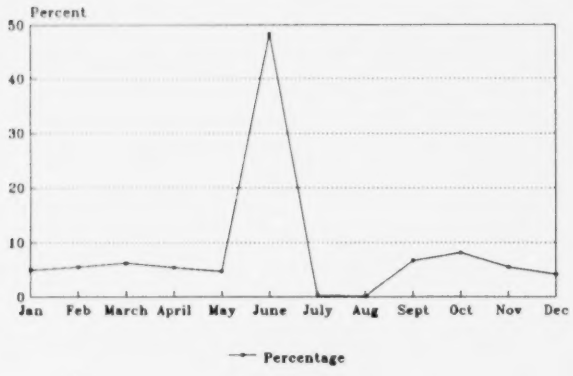


Figure 6
Last month of school attendance

success experiences may be critical to keeping them in school. Some summer leavers apparently enjoyed success in their

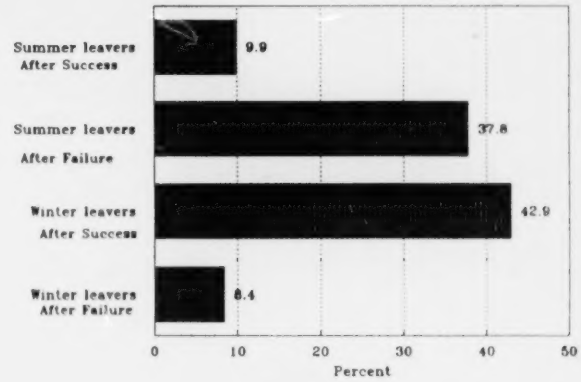


Figure 7
Time of year of leaving related to success in previous year

previous school year. Further analysis of the data may yield insight into the problem of predicting summer leaving. This must be solved if programs directed at these persons are to be accurately targeted and designed.

Level III School Leavers

The most salient group of early leavers in our study were those who had reached Level III before withdrawing from school. The size of the group was not the only factor of interest. This group had also enjoyed the most school success of all the leavers surveyed. They had persisted in school the longest. They were the oldest of the early leavers, well beyond school leaving age. Again, further study and analysis is required to understand this group better. However, success and achievement would appear to be the focus of the problem. There are two puzzles about this group. One is the question of why they fail to succeed at this point after enjoying relative success earlier in their school careers. The other is the question of why they do not persist, having persisted thus far in school.

Achievement One hypothesis is that large numbers fail to complete Level III because of the public examinations. Either they do not take the exams, or they fail them. A decision not to take the exams is a de facto decision to drop out. The decision may not be entirely in the hands of the students,

either. Because of the consequences of high failure rates, it may be that some students are discouraged from attempting the exams.

Failing the examinations implicates either the school standards for these students' work in the lower grades, or the standards set by the public examinations. Both possibilities are avenues to pursue. It goes without saying that school standards that fail to properly prepare students for the exams should be improved by modifying the instructional programs. One possibility is that reduced standards are applied to those perceived to be at risk for failure and possible early school leaving. This policy is shortsighted as the educational piper must be paid at some time. The students who receive this consideration must eventually pass the independent assessment of the public exams for which they are not then typically prepared. If anything, the impact of this failure can be predicted to be greater than failure in the school; this may have something to do with the failure of many to persist. School programming must present genuine instruction to the students at the requisite standard. There should be no compromise on this point, even though the instruction must take into account the learning characteristics of the students. Compromise will only obscure the problem and make it more difficult to resolve.

The appropriateness of the standards set by the public examinations are a different matter. In fact, it may be the case that the schools' assessment of these students is more appropriate than the examinations. The validity and reliability of the examinations, and the way that results are reported, all have a bearing on their usefulness in judging the attainments of students. These matters have hardly been investigated. Some students who fail the exams and leave may represent special cases to which the normal examination assumptions do not apply. Given up-to-standard instruction, the school marks should validate the exam marks. So, when a group of previously successful students fail the exams, the performance of the examinations should be scrutinized as well as the performance of the students.

Non-academic Factors Some other possibilities can be advanced which may have bearing on the failure of students experiencing difficulty in Level III to persist. One, mentioned earlier, is the possibility that the experience of failure, genuine or not, may prove too difficult for these people to handle: they may respond to the stress by withdrawing from the situation. Programs to immediately follow-up and support these people may be helpful while they marshall the personal resources to try again.

Naturally, the problem is not likely to be that simple. In a population that is probably going to question the relevance of the experience in any case, failure may simply validate their assessment of the applicability of the school experience to their lives. Add to this the possibility that they may have had no plans for post-secondary attendance, and it can be seen that motivation to persist would be quite low.

VIEW OF THE HELPING PROCESS BY EARLY LEAVERS

Early leavers seemed to view helpers in different and compartmentalized ways. There was no sense from the analysis that leavers appreciated the intimate relationship between education and work and the need to integrate information in decision making. The people in our survey tended to focus on single sources of information or assistance, generally directly associated with the problem at hand. Thus, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) (See Fig. 8) had a high profile in job hunting while school personnel were consulted for educational planning other than

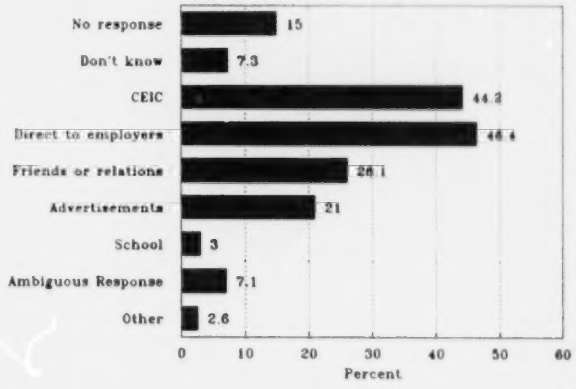


Figure 8
Sources consulted about work

dropping out (See Fig.9). Parents were the people most involved with the school-leaving decision. This focus and reliance on a single source has limitations which are probably not perceived by the early leaver, despite the sources appearing highly credible.

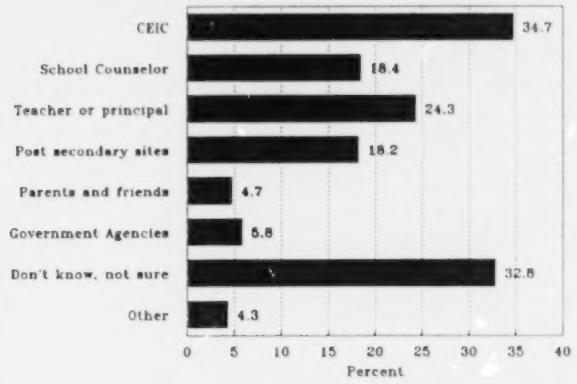


Figure 9
Sources of information consulted about education

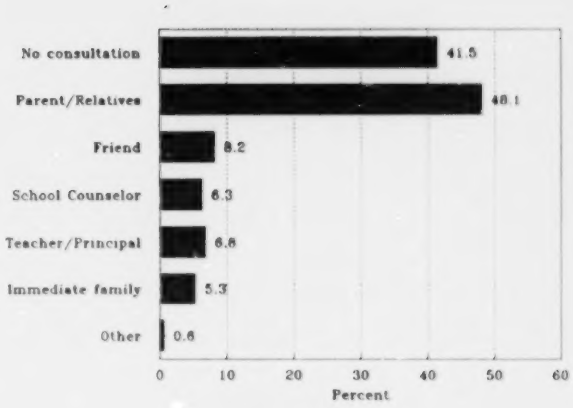


Figure 10
Sources consulted about school leaving

Help in Deciding to Leave

The decision to leave school is a case in point. At this time, the available evidence seems to suggest that large numbers of people leave school for social reasons, rather than academic reasons. It is probably a personal decision, and many people report leaving without consulting anyone. Although the trend is not pronounced, the older one is, the less likely one is to consult someone else. Parents are most frequently consulted, when anyone is consulted at all (See Fig. 10).

Not much is known about the ways that parents influence the motivation and decision making of their children. Some evidence suggests that many parents do not feel equipped to advise their children, even though they generally hold high aspirations for them. They feel that their children must make their own decisions about schooling. In the case of students who successfully graduate, this has been shown to be one of the factors differentiating those who pursue post-secondary studies, and those who do not. This could very likely be a factor in the early-leaving process, as well. Programming that is directed at the empowerment of parents to assist in the decision process might help to change some of the decisions now being made to leave school. Some consideration should be given to the benefits of this programming being rooted in the community, rather than in the school.

Help in Pursuing Educational and Occupational Planning

The tendency of the early leaver to pursue a single source of assistance in solving problems and making decisions has been noted already. The CEIC has a very high profile in this regard. Many leavers seem to believe that it provides comprehensive program of assistance, even though it clearly does not. Similarly, many leavers say they will go to the community college for help in educational planning, even though, once again, community colleges are ill-equipped to provide the comprehensive range of services that are required.

Part of the difficulty may be in the way that leavers perceive their need. We suspect that these perceptions are shaped by problems and decisions immediately at hand. Leavers form judgements about the availability of help based on experience with helpers previously available to them in the community. Programming to put in place comprehensive planning and placement services, which could deal with out-of-school clients on a long-term basis, might help foster an awareness of the need to be proactive, rather than reactive.

This service would bridge the services now available in many schools and in Canada Employment Centres. This kind of service would be particularly helpful to those who have already left school, but should also be available to everyone approaching school-leaving age.

AFTER SCHOOL LEAVING

The Future

The general plans of the majority of school leavers involved working, although very few actually had firm employment when they quit school (See Fig. 11). A number of leavers planned to return to "trades" school or night school. A few even said they planned to return to high school. With the exception of those who said that they had a job ready for

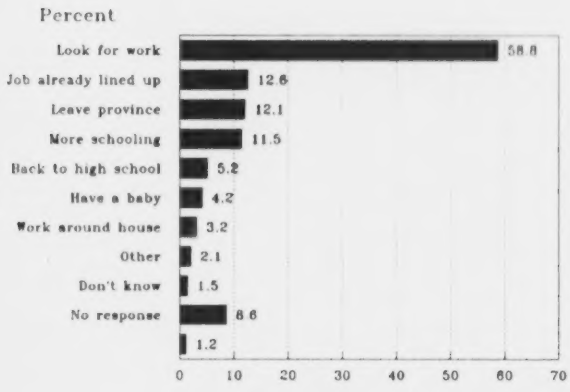


Figure 11
Plans at the time of school leaving

them, and those who were getting married or having a child, no one reported leaving school to pursue specific and defined goals. Some said simply that they planned to travel or leave the province, without any other indication of what their plans might be. There was a sense of general aimlessness in this group. The belief that school has no relevance is just a symptom of this.

Most leavers expected to be working or in school in the near future and in the long term, although there were some gender differences. Twice as many females as males were uncertain whether they would have employment in the long

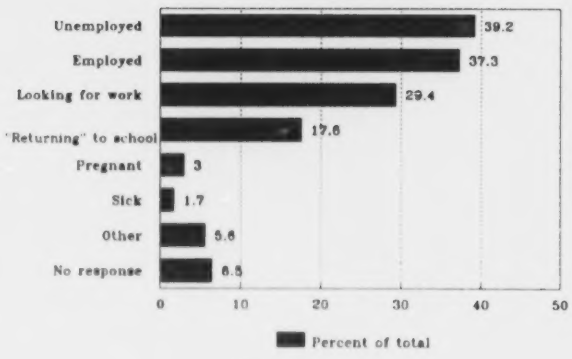


Figure 12
Status of early leavers at time of interview

term. It is possible that they were commenting as much on the opportunities likely to be open to them, as on their own decision to participate in the paid labour market. At the time of this interview, about one year after school leaving for most, less than half of the leavers reported that they were employed (See Fig. 12). Some said they were returning to school, but had not yet applied or been accepted.

Job Search and Job Holding Skills

Job search skills are the knowledge and skills that relate to the ability to access the job market. By extension, search skills are also relevant to the ability to access educational opportunity. Early leavers generally expressed some concern about their ability to attain job entry. An analysis of questions designed to estimate the level of their search skills tends to confirm that there is good reason to be concerned. Most early leavers expected to rely on personal contact during job search. This is at variance with the realities of the broader labour market situation, though it may still be of significance in a local context.

The early leaver's knowledge of job-holding skills revealed what they thought were important employee characteristics needed to retain employment (See Fig. 13). Personal characteristics were mentioned most frequently and job skills were not mentioned by many. Upgrading efforts were not thought by anyone to be of interest to employers. It appears that the level of jobs that were anticipated by most leavers

were jobs that could be maintained without extensive skills or upgrading efforts. In addition, the persons responding to the survey would have had work experience requiring minimal entry skills and on-the-job training. This experience could

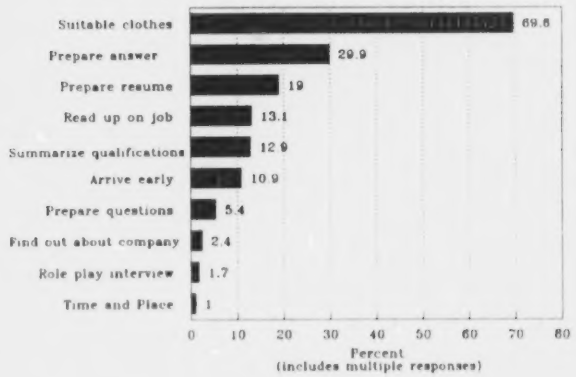


Figure 13
How respondents would prepare for an interview

predispose them to place more emphasis on their personal characteristics in the work setting (See Fig. 14).

At the same time there was a clear inconsistency in the responses to the questions about employment and training expectations and the fact that the respondents had not yet even attained high school graduation. A number of early leavers who believed that they would be working in the future felt that they would have jobs that required two to four years specific vocational training. This represents a significant aspiration for people who had recently decided to terminate their formal secondary education, and it is not clear just how they viewed the process of attaining these goals. And, in the case of job-holding skills, it contradicts their understanding of what characteristics employers look for in employees.

Aspirations

The legal school-leaving age defines societal expectations for minimum school attendance. Beyond this, students are responsible for shaping their own lives. In a society which tolerates widely differing aspirations and life styles, it is not surprising that a number of people choose a pattern that differs from the mainstream. We have to assume that early leaving provides satisfactions that are important to the leaver; that their perceived expectations for continued satisfaction are reasonable, regardless of mainstream opinion about the advisability of early leaving.

The aspirations of early leavers reflect the reality that they have experienced. Most expect to be engaged in traditional work near their present homes. Some anticipate this work to be seasonal. Others are unsure about their future level of

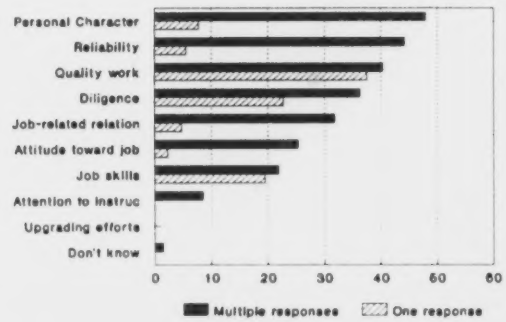


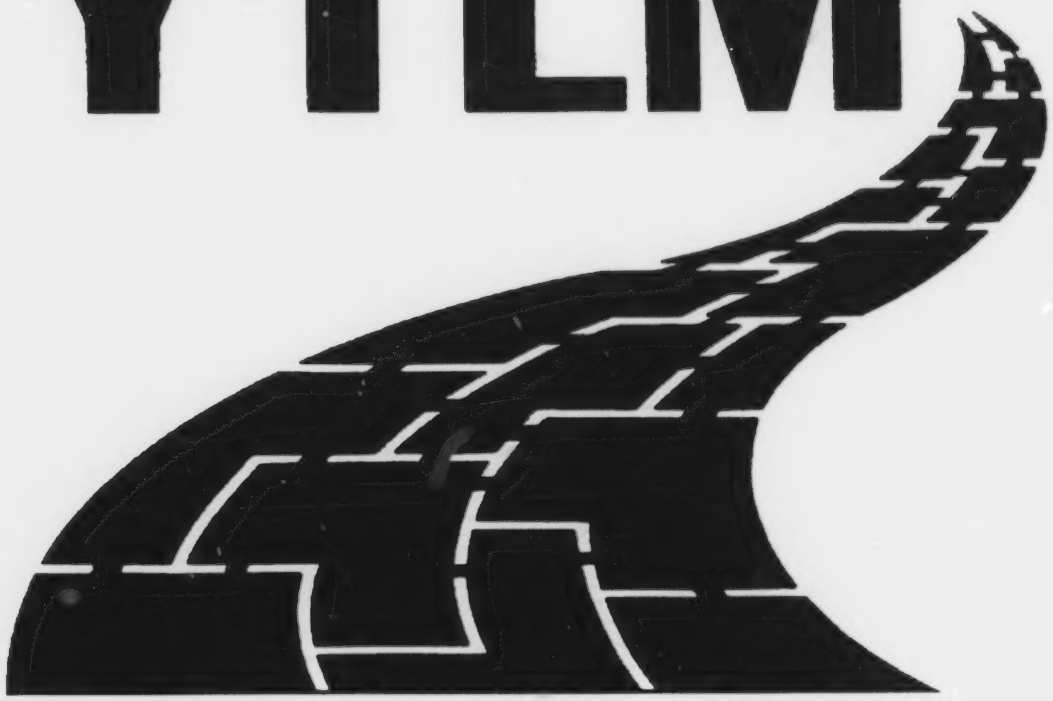
Figure 14
Things thought to be important to employer

dependence on programs of income support. They foresee education that is job specific and limited in scope. Interpreted in the light of these aspirations, the public school experience can be seen as not particularly relevant.

This view of the future is at absolute variance with the view of the future that was taken by Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. The House Commission foresaw a Newfoundland economy of small, local enterprises, using modern methods and technology, fuelled by a work force well educated in generic, transferable skills. Having the work force in place was viewed as a necessary precondition to start the process of economic renewal. There was no evidence that our early leavers had an outlook even approaching this. The early school leaver appears to be firmly rooted in the present, when mainstream opinion is that the present is outdated. This discontinuity in the future outlook of early leavers is the greatest challenge confronting programs designed to bring them into the mainstream economy.

YOUTH TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

YTLM



THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS:

INITIAL SURVEY

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Centre for Educational Research and Development
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November 1990

YOUTH TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS:

INITIAL SURVEY

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A project the size of the Transition of Youth into the Labour Market cannot succeed without the assistance and cooperation of a great many people. We have been most fortunate to have received help from every direction, and from so many that it would be impossible to acknowledge all by name, or to describe all their efforts on our behalf. We can only say what we truly feel--that Newfoundland has an enormous resource in its people, dedicated to understanding and solving the very difficult problems that confront it.

We owe most of all to the group of early school leavers who were most generous with their time and patience in enduring our attentions, especially during an interview that lasted three quarters of an hour or more. To them it must at times have seemed silly, and perhaps embarrassing. It took courage on their part to reveal to us many of their thoughts and beliefs about a decision that they took in opposition to what many would think as the right way to go. In the process, these people have taught us new perspectives and a greater sympathy for the people we talk about when we refer to the "dropout".

The more than one hundred people who represented us in the field, and helped to identify, locate and finally conduct most of the interviews with early leavers made a contribution that is difficult to over-estimate. Our undertaking to find and interview as many early leavers as possible in the course of a year was daunting. The field workers, with their intimate knowledge of local conditions and their ability to establish rapport with the early leavers, helped us to meet this objective, and establish the project on a firm foundation in its initial phase.

We asked and received help from more than half of the high school principals in the Province, all of whom responded with interest and commitment to helping their students and former students. They are all aware of the heavy charge that has been given to them, and are committed to understanding their role in assisting youth in transition. Without the

help of the principals, it would not have been possible for us to identify as many early leavers as we did, and to organize the field workers for the interviews.

Every project is marked by a few people whose contributions stand out. We take pleasure in making special note of these and in expressing our sincere appreciation. First, we would like to thank Ms. Kelly Brocklehurst who was responsible for producing the manuscript. All of us struggled with the intricacies of technology at this stage, but Ms. Brocklehurst was able to get beyond the difficulties, with unfailing good humour. She gave of her own time in the process and enabled us to finally give form and substance to the final product.

We were privileged to work with Mr. Robert Thompson, now working with the Division of Inter-Governmental Affairs, who originated the idea for the project within the old Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies. Through his efforts, faith in the idea and in us, the project was funded and supported through its initial phases.

We recently lost our senior research assistant, Ms. Charlotte Strong, to the new Royal Commission on Education. During her time with us, she was our best critic, forcing us always to look at data from other perspectives, and identifying the biases that we carried into its interpretation.

Finally, we would like to make special mention of Mrs. Gwen Brokenshire, who has recently retired after several years with the Institute for Educational Research and Development, of the old Faculty of Education. Mrs. Brokenshire carried the project through its initial stages and provided continuity during periods of incomplete and uncertain funding. The data collection phase upon which this report is based was organized solely by her. She helped in designing the questionnaire, organized and conducted its tryout stage, and supervised its typing and reproduction. She was our pipeline to the school principals and field interviewers. It was her responsibility to actually carry out procedures to

identify the early leavers. She developed the interviewing procedures and the techniques for training interviewers by telephone. When the data came in from the interviews, she organized and supervised data entry. Her "bible", developed as a result of this work, has served as a source for the project in its subsequent phases. We are sincerely grateful to her for the time, effort and dedication that she had for the project, and attribute a large measure of its success to her work.

FOREWORD

The study of youth transition into the labour market began several years ago, in the spring of 1987, when the Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies advertised for proposals to prepare a longitudinal study design of the transition of youth. The authors, then as part of the Institute of Educational Research and Development, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, made a submission and were awarded the contract. A report was made that became the basis for YTLM, the Transition of Youth into the Labour Market. The Department and the Institute, are no more, each the casualty of restructuring. Now, the authors, members of the Centre for Educational Research and Development within the Faculty of Education, work on the project with the Newfoundland Department of Education. Funding is provided by the Canada/Newfoundland Youth Employment Strategies Program and the Department of Education.

The project is a developmental study of the process of youth as they make the difficult transition into the labour market of Newfoundland and Labrador. The study was undertaken with the broad purpose of developing an understanding of the aspirations and needs of youth to better devise programming to help to meet these needs. The data gathered by the project can be analyzed on behalf of all agencies in the province, in addition to the government, who are involved in programming for youth.

A theoretical model has developed from the study which is used to help investigate the developmental span beginning with the completion or termination of the high school experience of youth, and continuing through age 25. Special, but not exclusive attention is given to the problems of young women, and rural Newfoundlanders.

The project consists of two parallel yet interrelated studies, one focusing on the full cohort of approximately 9000 Level III high school students at the end of the 1988-89 school year, and a second, which focuses on the full year cohort of students (grade 7 to Level III) who

dropped out of school between Easter, 1987 and Easter 1988. So far, each cohort has been surveyed twice, and there are plans to survey each on two to three more occasions. The questions asked during the surveys focus on themes common to all youth over the time span of the study, which presently is anticipated to extend through approximately age 25 for most subjects. In addition, other data have been provided through the Newfoundland Department of Education records and added to the project data base.

The local school systems were used to access the Level III sample and administer the initial questionnaire. School authorities were also instrumental in identifying and setting up the initial interviews with the early school leavers.

Three general questions are being asked in the analysis.

Question One. What is the nature of the transition of Newfoundland youth into the labour market, and what are the patterns of transition which relate to success and failure in transition?

Question Two. What is the status of the individual with respect to: 1)aspirations and work values; 2) search skills; 3) decision characteristics; 4) job-holding skills; 5) context factors; and 6) job-related skills?

Question Three. What changes take place through a transition stage in terms of: 1) aspirations and work values; 2) search skills; 3) decision characteristics; 4) job-holding skills; 5) context factors; and 6) job-related skills?

A number of groups of youth have been targeted at this time for special attention in the project. These are significant groups of youth who are already known to enter into the transition with serious difficulties to overcome if the transition is to be successful. They include young women completing high school, but not entering post-secondary training; rural

youth completing high school, but not entering a post-secondary institution; youth who drop out prior to entering Level I in high school; youth who drop out after entering Level I; persons failing to complete post-secondary programs; persons who drop out who apply for upgrading (and those who do not apply); persons evolving a pattern of UIC and "make work" dependency; and other groups as they emerge from the analysis of the data.

Information from the study has already been used by a number of groups working with youth: several of the local youth strategies committees have received information about the nature of early school-leaving in their areas; WISE (Women in Science and Engineering has received information that has helped in the evaluation of their work; and the Department of Education has used information in the study of youth who leave the Province to attend post-secondary training programs. This is the first of several reports by the authors about the study. The next will report on the initial survey of Level III, and will be followed (it is hoped in short order) by reports of the first follow-ups of each of the groups.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the authors at: Centre for Educational Research and Development, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, (709)-737-3506/7549.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Study of the Transition of Youth into the Labour Market is a longitudinal study planned to cover a five year period from the time that Newfoundland youth are preparing to leave public school until most are prepared for job entry or have had time to establish themselves as workers and homemakers. The primary purpose of this study will be to focus on a special aspect of the transitional process: the set of accommodations that take place as youth develops to assume a position in the labour market.

This, the first of a series of reports to be based on the study, deals with the high school dropout, the *early school leaver*. Its focus is on the early leavers at the time of school leaving. It describes some of the reasons for leaving, the aspirations and plans of the leavers at the time, and some of their perspectives on the economic context. Early school leaving has been a central educational issue in the Province for many years, but never so much as since the issuance of the report of the Task Force on Employment and Unemployment, which targeted the early school leaver

as a critical barrier to be overcome in the Province's drive toward economic recovery.

There is some evidence that early school leaving has been reduced in recent years, perhaps to as low as 25% of all persons who are enroled. There is no reason to be optimistic, however, as the experience of larger and wealthier provinces such as Ontario will attest. From reports of dropout rates of over 30% in these provinces, it may be possible that the decrease that this province has experienced has "bottomed", and that further improvement will come only with a new approach to the question.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT

The decision to leave secondary school early can be made by students at any time after they reach the age of sixteen. It's causes must be viewed in terms of factors both internal and external to the school. There is evidence of a substantial dropout rate beginning in grade seven and continuing throughout the entire secondary school cycle.

Early school-leaving choices are made throughout this period. The change in program that occurs with Level I suggests the possibility of significant differences between the earlier and later school leaver. Dropouts in grades seven through nine will likely have lower levels of literacy. In fact, many will be functionally illiterate.

The dropout decision is very informal, and is bounded only by the law regarding school attendance, and even there, only marginally, as many dropouts have a high level of absenteeism prior to the time they decide to leave for good. Little is known about dropping out as a process of transition. Are there factors other than academic success that influence the development of aspirations, and if so, are these a feature of the decision to drop out?

The nature of search for educational and work opportunities before and after dropping out is also an important, and presently unanswered, question. The problems confronted by secondary school dropouts are enormous. Essentially lacking even the basic skills required to equip them to deal with a modern job market, their options appear limited to the adoption of the traditional and contrived patterns of work, patterns that are disappearing through technological change, or because of changing political attitudes. An important aspect of this study will be the description of the life of the person after leaving school, and a detailing of job search.

THE CONCEPT OF TRANSITION

Over the past years, work has come to be thought of as an activity that is separate from education, homemaking and social activity. It is useful to remember that this view of work is an artifact of the industrial revolution, and that it was not always this way. In earlier days, work was introduced early as part of the life of a person, particularly in rural, resource based economies. One trained for work by working, and in the process became intimately identified with the work that one did. Formal education was reserved for only a few, and did not play a significant role in preparing the majority to begin to work. Apprenticeship was the main route to learning a skilled trade.

Increasing industrialization changed this pattern. Employment in agriculture and other resource-based industry both declined in absolute numbers in a dramatic way, and moved away from small family operations, to large business-oriented operations. The largest employer became industry, which required skills learned largely on the job. As the trades became more technical, formal training in the schools became a normal prerequisite to entrance into apprenticeship. Increasingly, work was viewed as separate from other aspects of living. Education became to be viewed as a preparation for work, but somehow separate from work. In fact, work became separated from most other aspects of life so that the

sense of early involvement in work became lost, and the need to make a transition to work became part of the development of most young adults.

This view of work, and its relationship to other life functions has been changing, never more so rapidly than in recent years. The change in the view of work is due to a number of factors.

First, it has become increasingly accepted that work contributes in a major way to the overall view that people create of themselves. It is a socializing agent as well as an economic necessity. It is a major factor in defining who one is in the social order, so the separation between work and outside social and leisure activity is not very distinct. The workplace exerts a major influence on the social well-being of the individual, and in turn, the work of a person will be strongly influenced by social factors. Social influences can be expected to play a major role in transition.

Second, the workplace is becoming subject to major stresses, first in the increasing dependence on technology; second, in the increasing rate at which the changeover to technology is occurring; and third, in the amount of information that is needed by modern workers, and in the increasing sophistication of the means for transmitting information, in particular, information about the use of technology. The worker is increasingly required to prepare for work that is constantly changing, so that he or she must come to the workplace with skills that can adapt to change. In addition, as the technology changes, old jobs disappear to be replaced by work that requires quite different skills. This means that workers must be educated in the new skills, with possible dislocation to their personal lives.

Finally, the work force is changing in very important ways with the entrance of larger numbers of women than ever before. The view of homemaking as a distinct option is becoming blurred as increasing numbers of women pursue careers. For women, themselves, increasing acceptance of their role as a wage-earner has made their planning much more difficult as they resolve the resulting conflicts between this and the more traditional options that they have.

The result appears to be a lifestyle for people which combines the life functions of work, education, family and social activity and leisure. Each of the four components must accommodate, and be accommodated by, each of the others. This is what the process of transition is - those events, activities, decisions, and so forth, that lead to this accommodation. In the broadest sense, the criterion of a successful transition is the degree to which each life function supports all the others. The study of transition into the labour market, then, becomes a study of the accommodations that are made as young people undertake adult responsibility.

In Newfoundland, where the economy has remained rooted in the rural, resource-based activities of the small community, the problem differs from areas that have been more heavily industrialized. Both technological change and declining resources have combined to limit job opportunities in the traditional endeavors. In an environment requiring a high degree of adaptability, the available evidence suggests that Newfoundlanders have not been as successful as needed to make the required adjustments.

The problem for the Newfoundlander is not as simple as the acquisition of new skills. Jobs are disappearing from the rural economy without others emerging to take their place. Learning new skills is not enough. People in this situation must either create new kinds of work in their communities, or they must also learn a new way of life, and cut long-established community and family ties. Becoming more adaptable in the workplace will not be enough to make a successful transition. People will also have to be more adaptable in their personal lives, and perhaps learn to find personal satisfaction in new environments.

LABOUR MARKET TRANSITION AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM

The problem of transition is a global problem, and it has most of the dimensions of the problem in Newfoundland. Banducci (1984) noted youth unemployment to be typically two or three times higher than adult

unemployment and revolved around poor preparation in school, limited practical experience in business and industry, as well as difficulties in skill training acquisition and apprenticeship. Youth, it seems, are negatively affected by all types of unemployment -- structural, seasonal, cyclical and functional. The costs to them include lost earnings, interest, credibility, and psychological problems as well as secondary personal costs associated with unproductive time, for example, crime and drug and alcohol abuse (LeRoy, 1984; Picus & Cohen, 1982). With one-half of all young Newfoundlanders between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in rural areas, (and with less than high school graduation), unemployed (Royal Commission, 1986), the potential for problems remains high. As long as such conditions continue to exist and there is need for a highly skilled future workforce, youth unemployment will remain a high priority for politicians (Picus & Cohen, 1982). Youth unemployment cannot be viewed in a vacuum however, but as a component of an economic and political picture that includes the issues of general employment, social welfare and the economy (Forrester et al., 1983; Picus & Cohen, 1982; Reubens, 1981).

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND THE LABOUR MARKET TRANSITION

The recent Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment in Newfoundland (1986) concluded that "Newfoundlanders must pursue with vigour a new vision of the future, building on our strengths so that, together, we may forge a strong economy and society and a new sense of self-reliance" (p. 457). Newfoundland and Labrador is a predominantly rural province where 32% of the population live in communities of less than 1,000 people and 60.2% in communities of less than 5,000 people. Our economic history is one of failed attempts to establish an industrialized society and, although having some comparative advantage, relatively unsuccessful attempts to stabilize our primary resource sectors of mining, fishing, and forestry (Royal Commission, 1986). The province has the lowest labour force participation rate in Canada, the highest

unemployment rate, and the highest youth unemployment rate. The aspirations of the Royal Commission only hint at the major shifts in policy and practice required to achieve such a vision.

It is within this context that youth make, or may attempt to make some form of transition into the labour market. The House Commission envisioned a route to economic recovery for the Province that depended on the existence of an educated and trained workforce in place to fuel the development of small local enterprises that exploited new technologies. In order to achieve this end an entire social pattern has to be reoriented from one where education was not necessary to individual economic success and well-being to a situation where education is recognized as essential. The old skills, learned largely on the job in an economy that was in place must be replaced by skills and knowledge learned in the classroom, to be used in work that is far removed from the experience of the prospective workers, and in enterprises not yet even visualized, let alone funded, developed, and put in place. For this to work, the process of redirecting training and education must also keep the present population where it is now, in the communities of Newfoundland.

THE PROCESS OF WORK TRANSITION

The Goals of Transition

A general view of the study of transition is that it will focus on the adjustments or accommodations that are made by young people to satisfy individual goals and develop a satisfying lifestyle. A study of youth transition into the labour market, such as the present study, cannot produce results unless it takes the more general view that transition into work is only a part of the overall transition being made. Indeed, it may be viewed by some as a relatively unimportant part.

The process of transition is life-long, and at any point, work transition would be regarded by the society at large as successful if the individual

was engaged in activity that would lead to the acquisition of skills and attitudes that are believed to contribute to the goal of economic independence. Of particular importance are those skills that are believed to lead to greater adaptability in the work force. They may be generally categorized as the training, job search, decision-making and job holding attributes possessed by the individual. In a somewhat different but critical category are those attributes associated with ability to generate new employment opportunity.

Education and Training

In our society, education is a universally valued activity as it leads, in general, to greater success in the obtainment of employment. We do not make any distinction at this point between educational and training programs, preferring instead to make distinctions in terms of their contribution to the societal work transition goals.

Studies virtually without number have attested to the fact that the highest levels of employment are enjoyed by the more highly educated sectors of the society. While the educated tend also to be better compensated as well, it does not necessarily follow that the economic benefits that they enjoy are commensurate with the investment in education that they have made. It seems possible that education may contribute to work transition goals in ways other than the obvious provision of skills required to qualify for existing employment opportunity. It is evident that a clear decision about the usefulness of an educational experience would be difficult to make, and that transition success should not be judged solely on the basis of participation in education or training, or in terms of job-holding and income.

The Transition Process

It becomes clear that in pursuing the societal goal of economic independence, it is necessary to acquire more than the skills required to perform a job. Attributes in support of the work transition, itself, are also

required. An aspirant for employment must identify available work opportunities, decide which opportunities to pursue, and once successful in gaining employment, must retain the job.

Job search attributes are those that are associated with the identification of, and competition for, employment opportunity. This may be generalized to include more general career search, including the search for educational experiences.

Knowledge is the first attribute of importance. In the literature, this is inevitably described as knowledge of the "world of work", although the knowledge required is more extensive than information about available work (and career) opportunity. In addition to this, the individual needs to know about educational opportunities that exist, ways to gain entrance and ways to finance education.

More than this, a meta-knowledge is required. The individual needs to know about information sources and how to access and exploit them to get the necessary information. As development progresses, and the work environment changes, knowledge about work will have to be updated to suit the current transition state of the individual.

An aspiration is required around which to organize search. It may be as vague as wanting to find "some kind of job" or as specific as "I want to be a plumber". Possession of a job aspiration is an essential component of search, and therefore the development of aspiration is of great interest in the study of work transition. Of special interest are those persons who appear to have no aspirations. Implied in an aspiration is a motive to work, so absence of aspiration implies that the person sees no relationship between work and the attainment of personal satisfactions.

The individual may have an entirely different view of the reasons to work than society does. It is only from the individual's perspective that the process of work transition can be understood and influenced. The process is governed by the priority placed on the individual work motives,

and the probability that these priorities can be met by work of a particular kind. This is the nature of the accommodation that takes place in transition. Understanding the transition to work first requires an understanding of the role played by work in the satisfaction of individual motives.

The Context of Transition

Transitional decisions take place in an environmental context that operates to control both opportunity, and the perception that people have of their opportunities. The number and type of jobs actually available to young people, and their beliefs about this will influence search decisions considerably.

The context is the real world with which the person must deal in making the work transition. It is multifaceted, and much of it is outside the control of the individuals involved. The macro context is comprised of the major, widespread influences that are distanced from individuals. These are the economic trends, major policy changes of government, and the introduction of radical innovation (such as the new technology). These factors can be expected to influence all persons in the same way, so the individual perception of these factors is important in explaining why people respond to them differently.

Institutional factors are somewhat closer to the person in the street. Examples are the minimum wage, entrance requirements for educational programs, educational programs that are available, and the demand for programs. Yet others are collective agreements, limits on enrolment, and unemployment insurance. These factors do not always influence all persons in the same way. For example, the entrance requirements of Memorial University would apply to all applicants, but the quality and breadth of the revised high school program varies from school to school, causing variations in the options available to students who are nonetheless restricted to enrolment in a specific school.

An interesting aspect of the contextual factors is the conventional wisdom that develops around them. Reports in the media, statements by politicians and the experiences of acquaintances all contribute to the way that the individual perceives the context. Education is the only counter to the public misperceptions of policy, trends, and other factors that nonetheless have an important bearing on transitional decisions.

A fair amount of research evidence exists indicating that the possession of job-related skills is not the most important attribute of successful employees. The best employees also possess important job holding attributes such as, interpersonal skills, work habits and attitudes that will make them preferred over others who could even have better job skills.

Decision Points in Transition

The issue of choice is central in the Youth Transition Study because of the relationship that can be said to exist between individual choice and the attainment of societal goals. Individual choice establishes the pattern of work transition. For example, a decision to stay in school is considered to be evidence of a more adaptive career pattern than a decision to leave school early because it is assumed that persons with more education and training will be more adaptive to a wider range of employment opportunities. However, choice is made on the basis of individual interests and satisfactions. In some way or another, all contemporary theories of vocational development make this assumption. The attainment of the societal goals for work transition must be understood from the perspective of satisfaction of the individual goals, and the role that this plays in choice.

A study of work transition, then, will focus on the decision points, where a new accommodation is being made in the transitional process. Choices vary in character. Some signal a dramatic shift in the developmental pattern of the individual. Others are more incremental in their impact. Some are precipitated by a dramatic event, for example, a declaration of redundancy. Others develop over a long period from the personal reflections of the individual making the decision. All choices are

preceded by an initiating event of some sort, and involve some preparation, however brief, such as search.

Types of choices can be described. Some are institutional and virtually mandated. Most of the choices in high school fall into this category. Others are mandated by custom. The decision about what to after high school falls into this category. Most choices come at unpredictable times, but many will be faced by most persons. For this study, the most important decisions are about the timing of search for new educational and job opportunities, and about the kind of education and job opportunities that should be pursued and chosen. There are a number of decisions about the personal side of life that relate importantly to decisions about work. If and when to marry and where to live are examples.

We focus on the choices made in the career development of the young person, and the activity that accompanies the choices that are made. Recognizing that some choices are "non-choices", in that the person does not always engage in decision-making activity in support of the choices, we seek first to define where these major points of departure tend to fall in the lives of young people.

Dropping-out, that is, leaving an educational program before its completion, is a major choice pattern of concern, because in general, it is regarded to be too early a departure from a pattern that leads to the attainment of the higher order employment goals. At a minimum, early program leaving threatens the ability of the person leaving to adapt to the labour market. At all levels, a decision to leave a program of education or training before its completion tends to be associated with lack of success in the program. The factors leading to this lack of success are not well understood, although they are quite complex, and not necessarily under the control of the early leaver.

Defining The Success of Work Transition

As earlier discussed, work transition is developmental, and comprises a process of accommodation of work, educational, and social experience in a large number of patterns, beginning with required attendance in school and continuing through combinations of school, work, duties in the home and leisure time. At any point in time in a longitudinal study, people will be in a number of different phases of different patterns of transition. One of the major problems of a study like this is to identify the common patterns so that they can be examined as possible targets for programming. A second problem is the description of success of a pattern at any given phase. This is important in order to examine the effectiveness of programs that are currently affecting patterns of transition within the study sample.

In general, it can be assumed that all elements of the work transition process may be examined at any stage. It may not be assumed, however, that the same measures of success can be universally applied at all stages to all patterns that may be observed. Quite obviously, a measure of the success of job search must be different for people searching for educational programs than that which would apply when looking for a job. Likewise, measures of the attainment of the societal goal of economic independence will be different for those who are working and those who are in school--even though both may be properly judged on this basis.

The problem of defining success in transition, therefore, is no trivial matter, and is easiest when measured from the point of view of the individual. Individual satisfaction with the accommodation that has been made socially, vocationally, educationally, and the sense of accompanying fulfilment is the criterion from the perspective of the individual. In a real sense, people can be asked quite simply if they are generally pleased with the way that their lives are going.

If this was all there was to it, however, there would be no need for this study. The social perspective on the success of transition is also at issue.

This presents a set of much more complex judgements about the worth of the accommodations to the society. These judgements differ depending on who makes them, and the reasons that they are made. The local community will have an entirely different perspective on the value of an economic contribution than will the provincial or federal governments. At this stage of the study, therefore, we have chosen simply to describe, and have not tried to judge. To do so would have betrayed our own biases concerning these matters. If a bias exists, it is in the material that we have chosen to study and report, material which focuses primarily on the educational and vocational aspects of transition.

SUMMARY

The process of transition to work is subject to a complex array of influences. The process itself can be characterized as a set of accommodations to satisfy individual motives for economic security, social reinforcement and individual actualization. In examining work transition itself, five main factors are involved: 1) job-related skills; 2) search skills; 3) decision skills; 4) job-holding skills; and 5) context factors. Since transition to work is only part of the broader transition that is taking place -- that is, development into adulthood -- it must be studied from two distinct perspectives. The first is the role that work must play in satisfying individual motives. This is important to understanding the degrees of freedom of the individual in actually undergoing a transition to work, which would be the second perspective of the study.

SECTION TWO

PROCEDURES SUMMARY

IDENTIFYING THE EARLY LEAVER

Survey Strategy

The sampling process for this study proceeded in two stages. In the first, schools were asked to identify persons who were classified as early school leavers by them, including all persons who had left school and were lower than the mandated school leaving age of sixteen. In the second stage, field interviewers attempted to locate and interview each of the identified early leavers. The field interviewers were persons who resided in the same area as the school reporting the name of the early leavers. Each field interviewer also went to the school and obtained the information included in the school leaving report normally forwarded to the Department of Education by the school. This was not available in all cases.

A second attempt at identification was made by comparing the returns from the first study stage with the Department of Education school leaving returns. A few additional early leavers were located in this way.

Cooperating Schools

The Youth Transition project has enjoyed outstanding cooperation from the schools, nowhere so evident as during the identification stage of the first early leaver survey. All procedures were based on the 1987-88 Newfoundland School Directory. This was supplemented later by, more accurate information on school enrolments. The problem of maintaining accurate and timely information about all the schools under its jurisdiction is an extremely difficult one, but we found the data that the Department of Education provided to be an invaluable resource. Nonetheless, there are bound to be differences in the figures reported in such documentation, and similar information on the period, reported elsewhere. We believe that those differences were small, however, and of no consequence to the validity of the study.

Initially, all schools reported to have at least a grade seven were surveyed, since it was expected that all, or nearly all, early leavers would be in at least grade seven, including a fair number in the junior high school grades of seven to nine. In the fall of 1987, a letter was sent to the building administrator (school principal) requesting the names and addresses of students who had left school early. This was followed up in the winter and again in the early spring by the field interviewers to attempt to identify all early school leavers between Easter, 1987 and Easter, 1988. Easter was chosen, rather than the end of the school year, because it was believed that patterns of absenteeism and other factors would confound the identification of the summer leavers if the end of the year was used.

All schools (341 or 59.5% of the Provincial total) with any of the grades seven to Level III, were surveyed in the initial stage. Of this number, only 14 schools decided not to participate (see Table 1).

Thirty four different types of school were identified, when classified by the grade levels that they taught. The largest variety of school types involved grades seven through nine. In the initial survey stage, virtually

Table 1
Participation of schools in initial survey to identify early leavers

Survey Status of School	Number of Schools in Province (Total = 573)	Percentage of Total
Not Surveyed	232	40.5
Responded to Survey but not followed up	138	24.1
No response to survey	14	2.4
Responded and Followed up	189	33.0
Total Surveyed Initially	341	59.5

no early leavers were reported by school administrators of schools which combined elementary, or primary and elementary grades with grades seven, eight and nine. A large number of schools, 138, or 24.1% of the total, fell into this category. It was decided not to follow up on these schools any further to see if school leavers would be identified later in the year. In retrospect, this seems to have been a reasonable decision, since the largest group of leavers, the summer leavers, would have been identified in the first round of the survey.

Nonetheless, it is evident that grades seven through nine are possibly under represented in the survey. Almost 90% of all senior high students were found in the schools that were both surveyed in the Fall and followed up in the Spring, whereas about 61% of students in grades seven through nine were in schools with similar attention to the identification of early leavers (see Table 2).

No conclusion can be drawn from these data about the relative efficacy of different school organizations (grade level organization) in holding

Table 2
Comparison of school population and sample size

	School Population		
	Grade 7-9	Levels I - III[1]	Totals
Included, and followed up			
Freq.	19502	27963	47465
%	61.19	89.71	75.29
Included, not followed up			
Freq.	10043	1314	11357
%	31.51	4.22	18.1
Total in Province[2]	31870	31172	63042

[1]Includes reported Level IV population

[2]Totals could include small numbers in other school organization

students, but the observation is deserving of more intensive study. The finding could have been an artifact of the experimental procedures, and the reporting procedure that was used. However, it could be a matter of age and promotion policies in these types of schools, or it could simply be that articulation between schools is a stressor that is not tolerated well by the students in question. Finally, it could be that these schools do something important for the students that is both beneficial and long-lasting, and worth doing for others.

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The decision to use the interview process to gather information was made at the onset of the project. Given the typical difficulties associated with administering questionnaires to early school leavers, it was decided that

a face to face interview or a phone interview would better produce the desired results and provide a much more complete set of responses. It was also decided that the interview protocol would be highly structured, yet contain a number of questions that allowed for open ended responses from the early school leavers. The structuring gave consistency to the data gathering process and later aided with the data coding and analyses. The open ended questions used allowed for unrestricted early leaver responses which could be later categorised and appropriately coded.

Development of the interview protocol took place between the Fall of 1987 and the Spring of 1988. Reviews of relevant literature including school dropout questionnaires and interview forms had previously been under taken when the project was designed in the Spring of 1987. This information, together with the research questions to be addressed, formed the basis for the interview protocol.

As it was developed, the protocol went through many stages of refinement by the project team. The Department of Education Project Advisory Committee was also consulted throughout this process. Later stages of development involved field testing the instrument on a small sample of early leavers. The completed "Early School Leaver Interview Questionnaire" consisted of a 22 page document containing 63 questions.

Along with the interview protocol, an information booklet, "Interviewer's Manual, Early School Leaver Project" was developed to first of all help train and then assist the interviewers. It contained information and hints on how to approach certain questions and generally interact with the early leavers to obtain the best, but consistent results. In particular, it contained sections on the responsibilities of the interviewer, interview skills and techniques, and a guide to specific questions in the instrument.

THE SAMPLE

General Survey Outcomes

A total of 2109 early school leavers were identified using the procedures described earlier. This was probably a substantially smaller number than actually left school during the period, but is a better estimate than provided by the Department of Education school leaving reports. These formed the basis for an estimated 1509 early leavers reported by the Department for School Year 1987-88, the period that is coincidental with the survey reported here. The 1509 estimate was calculated using the Department publications Educational Statistics (March 1988 and March 1989 issues) and was found by taking the summer leavers reported for School Year 1986-87 and the winter leavers for School Year 1987-88. Other statistics reported by the Department raise further doubts about the degree of completeness of this survey. The comparison of grade eight enrolments and high school graduation suggests that early-leaving figures were actually in excess of 3000 for the period.

A number of factors contribute to the confusion about the actual scale of early leaving, not the least of which is definitional. No one has actually defined who an early school leaver is with respect to all categories of students, as will be evident later in discussions about persons who are in special programs in school. If we add to this the complexity of the problem of tracking children through the school system, it is possible that the full scale of early leaving will never be known.

Interview Outcomes

Once identified, an attempt was made to interview the early leavers. A group of field interviewers were nominated by school officials as persons who would be knowledgeable about the residence/school area, and capable of interacting well with the early leaver. These persons were recruited

and trained by a combination of letter and telephone procedures. They attempted to locate and interview all the early leavers who had lived in their area during school. If it was discovered that leavers had moved from the area, a forwarding address was obtained, and sent to the Youth Transition Study team. An attempt was made to locate and interview these persons from the University.

Most of the interviewing took place during the late Spring and late Fall of 1988. Extensive use was made of phone interviews, and every effort was made to locate each identified early school leaver. Also, it should be noted that persons reported as early leavers who had since returned to school, or who had written supplementary examinations and graduated from high school, were not interviewed.

A total of 1276 persons were actually interviewed. From these, a total of 1274 usable interviews were obtained, 60.41% of the original identified group of early leavers. It was evident from an examination of the returns that many of the early leavers were mobile, and that this was of major significance in getting interviews. Only 14.95% of the identified early leavers declined to be interviewed. Six hundred and forty of the identified early leavers were away from home, most of them outside Newfoundland, at the time of the interviews. An additional 108 were away from home at the time the sample was identified, but returned home before the interview. Thus, 35.47% of the identified early leavers had left home, and most of these had left the Province shortly after deciding to leave school. It was possible to make contact and interview only 166 of those away from home.

A total of 75.29% of all students in grades seven through Level III were in schools which were involved in the identification of our early leavers. As was seen earlier, an additional 18.1% were included in the initial survey but were not followed up. When a contrast of the various stages of the sampling procedure is made, some variations in the survey makeup can be noted. Students from high schools (Levels I through III) were over represented somewhat in the survey schools. The central high

school student is even more strongly over represented. All grade school students are represented about according to their strength in the school population as a whole. Junior high school students (in schools with grades seven to nine) are under represented in the surveyed schools (see Table 3).

The real issue is whether or not the sample is genuinely representative of the Newfoundland early school leaver, and it will not be possible to say that it is for sure for several reasons. First, some schools did not participate in the survey, and secondly a fair number, as rationalised earlier, were not followed up. There is no evidence of a sample bias in the case of the schools that did not participate. However, there is no doubt that persons drop out from the schools that were not followed up, and there is some possibility that they will differ from their fellow travellers who leave from the types of schools that were surveyed.

When the makeup of the sample is considered it is evident that there was differing success in interviewing early leavers from different types of schools. Leavers from the high schools were obviously more elusive than leavers from the central high schools. This may be due to the location of many of the high schools in the larger cities and towns, and the reduced familiarity of the interviewers with these settings.

It was possible to make contact and interview only 166 of those who were away from their home community, 25.9% of all those who had moved. Only 12 persons in this category who were actually contacted refused the interview. In contrast, virtually everyone living at home was located, although 304 of these individuals declined to be interviewed (see Table 4).

The group of early leavers who left home soon after school leaving is of considerable interest. They are also very elusive, as was shown by the experience of the Youth Transition Study in trying to locate and interview them. They are therefore not represented as well in this sample as would be wished.

Table 3
Comparison of grades seven through level III school population by school type, and sample representation

School type	NFLD population		Participating Schools		Identified Leavers		Interviewed Leavers	
	N	% total	N	%	N	%	N	%
I - III	8916	14.1	8916	18.3	474	22.5	230	18.1
3 - 9	290	0.5	290	0.6	6	0.3	4	0.3
4 - III	1055	1.7	1055	2.2	32	1.5	26	2.0
6 - III	1119	1.8	801	1.7	18	0.8	11	0.9
6 - 9	833	1.2	559	1.2	5	0.2	4	0.3
7 - III	19619	31.1	17799	37.5	758	35.9	488	38.3
7 - 9	5046	8.0	2490	5.3	30	1.4	16	1.3
8 - III	6169	9.8	4619	9.7	251	11.9	170	13.8
9 - III	4515	7.2	3957	8.3	161	7.6	100	7.9
K - I	79	0.1	29	0.1	4	0.2	2	0.2
K - II	70	0.1	70	0.2	3	0.1	1	0.1
K - III	7473	11.9	5999	12.6	329	15.6	202	15.8
K - 6	—	—	—	—	4	0.2	3	0.2
K - 7	880	1.4	111	0.2	1	0.0	0	0.0
K - 8	1863	3.0	105	0.2	3	0.1	2	0.2
K - 9	2834	4.5	665	1.4	28	1.3	15	1.2
Other	8417	13.4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unspecified					2	0.1	2	0.2
Total	63042	100	47465	75.3	2109	100	1276	100

Table 4
Interview status of identified early leavers
(N = 2109)

	Freq.	Percent
Interviewed		
At home	1110	52.6
Away from home, in Newfoundland	30	1.4
Away from home, outside of Newfoundland	136	6.5
Sub Total	1276	60.5
Not Interviewed		
Had Graduated prior to interview	20	0.9
Could not be located, living away from home, in Newfoundland	116	5.5
Outside Newfoundland	348	16.5
Returned to high school by interview time	33	1.6
Declined the interview (both away and at home)	316	15.0
Sub Total	833	39.5
Totals	2109	100

DISTRIBUTION CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Gender

The gender of 2107 of the identified early leavers was identical to the distribution of gender in the interviewed group. Seven hundred and ninety three persons, 62.1%, were male. The remaining 37.9% were female (see Table 5). In fact, this distribution of sample gender was constant for all distribution factors including denomination, school region, and the rural/urban split.

Table 5
Gender and interview status of identified early leavers

Gender	Interviewed	Not interviewed	Row Total
Male			
Freq.	793	518	1311
%	62.1	62.3	62.2
Female			
Freq.	483	313	796
%	37.9	37.7	37.8
Column Total			
Freq.	1276	831	2107
%	60.6	39.4	100.0

Denomination of Leavers

The percentage distribution of early leavers, by denomination, is shown in Table 6. A comparison of this distribution with that of the number of students, by denomination, in the school system indicates that significantly more interviewed persons came from the Integrated systems. However, the difference is not large and is not likely a major factor in the analysis.

Table 6
Proportion of leavers by denomination

Denomination	Provincial Students 7 - Level III (N = 62656)		Leavers Interviewed (N = 1274)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Integrated	36250	57.9	816	64.1
Roman Catholic	23208	37.0	394	30.9
Pentecostal	3198	5.1	64	5.0

Rural/Urban Distribution

For the purposes of this report, the Department of Education definition of rural/urban areas was used. Urban areas, by such definition, included the census metropolitan areas, the census agglomeration areas, and those communities with a population of 5000 or over. Rural areas were all other areas that did not fall within these categories.

The distribution of the 2109 early leavers was 64% rural and 36% urban. However, almost 69% of those actually interviewed were classified as rural, compared to almost 31% who were from urban regions. When contrasted to the make up of the grade seven through Level III population, it can be seen that there is a decided rural bias in the interviewed sample. Only about 52% of this population was rural (see Table 7).

The male/female distribution of early leavers, displayed in Table 8, is similar in both rural and urban areas, being approximately two thirds male and one third female. This distribution is similar for both the identified sample of early leavers as well as for those interviewed.

Table 7
The distribution of the 2109 early leavers by rural/urban

		Interviewed	Identified	7-III Population
Rural				
	Freq	882	1349	33150
	%	69.1	64.0	52.58
Urban				
	Freq.	394	760	29892
	%	30.9	36.0	47.42
Column Total				
	Freq.	1276	2109	63042
	%	60.5	100.0	

Table 8
Percentage of rural/urban leavers by gender

	Percent Early Leavers			
	Identified (N = 2107)		Interviewed (N = 1276)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rural	64	36	61	39
Urban	65	35	66	36

Regional Distribution

With respect to regions, they consist of five geographic divisions within Newfoundland and Labrador. These are shown in Figure 1. Region 1 is the Avalon Peninsula, Region 2 the South Coast, Region 3 Central Newfoundland, Region 4 the West coast, and Region 5 is all of Labrador.

Figure 1
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador by Region

Table 9 shows that of the 2109 early leavers, about 35% were found in Region 1, 14% in Region 2, 30% in Region 3, 16% in Region 4, and 5% in Region 5. There were differences in the proportion of interviewed leavers and identified leavers in Region one, which appeared to be under represented, and Region two, which is over represented.

A comparison can be made between the percentage distribution of early leavers across the Province with that of the actual grade 7 to Level III school population. For example, Region 1 contained about 39% of the grade 7 to Level III school population and approximately 235% of the early leavers. Using this information, it can be seen that Regions 1 and 3 appeared to have a comparatively higher proportion of early leavers than the other Regions. Also, the proportions change very little, except in Region 4 where it was estimated there would likely be an increase of

Table 9
Distribution of sample by region

Region		Early Leavers Interviewed	Early Leavers Identified	Population 7 - III
1	Freq.	380	730	25330
	%	29.8	34.6	38.9
2	Freq.	211	302	6693
	%	16.5	14.3	10.3
3	Freq.	407	641	16067
	%	31.9	30.4	24.7
4	Freq.	220	339	11099
	%	17.2	16.1	17.1
5	Freq.	58	97	5853
	%	4.5	4.6	9.0
Column Total				
	Freq.	1276	2109	65042
	%	60.5	100.0	100.0

number of early leavers when the non-responding schools are taken into account.

Within each Region the proportion of males to females for both the total number of early leavers identified (2109) and those interviewed (1274) was approximately two thirds male and one third female. However, within Regions 2 and 5, the distribution of the interviewed early school leavers favoured slightly more females (approximately 40% compared to 60% males). When the total percentage of males and females by region is examined, the distribution is similar.

SECTION THREE

THE DECISION TO LEAVE

DECISION MAKING

Very little is known about the process of early leaving, and how the decision to leave is made. The early leaver is characterized, even stereotyped in the literature as mostly male, low achieving, uninterested in and alienated from school, frequently absent, and possessing low self esteem. These are obviously stereotypes, painting a restrictive picture of people who are much more varied in their characteristics. This study did not address the process of leaving, although some information was collected that did give insight into the early leaver's status at the time of dropping out. Early leaving is obviously a complex question, deserving of very intensive study by itself.

For most, the process of early leaving is an extended one. Probably the conditions which led finally to leaving develop over time. For some, it is likely that a decision is never made to leave. One day, the person just fails to return for the final time.

When asked, most of the early leavers remembered actually thinking about leaving school for only a short time, from one to three months. For the 63.6% in this category, the actual decision is recalled to have occurred rather quickly (see Table 10).

Table 10
Amount of time thinking about leaving school
(N=1273)

Time	Frequency	Percent
1 - 3 months	810	63.6
3 - 6 months	130	10.2
6 months to 1 year	146	11.5
1 - 2 years	67	5.3
more than 2 years	43	3.4
No response	77	6.0

Some reported taking longer to decide, however, 10.2% thought about it for three to six months, while more than 19% recalled a period of decision-making from six months to two years and even more. A few (6.0%) did not respond to this question.

It is instructive to examine the differences in the dropout times reported by the schools, and those reported by the early leavers themselves (see Table 11). The differences in the school leaving times reported by the two sources are quite small, for the most part. In almost 88% of the cases, the reports were within two and one half weeks of each other. In an additional 7.6% of the cases, the two sources agreed within 12 weeks. While the school leavers differed with respect to the amount of time they spent actively making the decision to leave, the schools were probably aware that the possibility of leaving existed, and the schools generally knew when it actually occurred.

Some of the small differences in time may be accounted for by bookkeeping. As will be seen in another section, most early leavers make

Table 11
Date of school leaving: Difference in early leaver and school reports (N = 1110)

Difference, in weeks	Frequency	Percent
-30	2	0.2
-25	2	0.2
-20	2	0.2
-15	5	0.4
-10	8	0.7
-5	49	4.4
0	978	87.7
5	23	2.1
10	13	1.2
15	7	0.6
20	5	0.4
25	1	0.1
30	1	0.1

Mean = -1.5
Standard Deviation = 7.6
Median = -1.4

Note: Difference in weeks = date reported by student -- date reported by school.

the break during the summer. Verifying that a person has decided to leave school permanently becomes very difficult, especially when there is no consultation with the school, and becomes official only after an extended period of non-attendance.

Absenteeism

Early leaving has been described by many as being often preceded by an extended period of erratic school attendance. The significance of this is not clear. The more usual interpretation is that students fall behind in

their work as a result of absenteeism. This is thought to lead to a sense of failure, and a lowering of self-esteem, leading then to a decision to leave school. Quite possibly, however, the intent to leave school may be formed before extended absenteeism begins (see Table 12).

Table 12
Record of attendance of early leavers
(N=818)

Attendance	Frequency	Percent
Poor (> 16 days absent)	420	51.3
Average (6 - 15 days absent)	280	34.3
Good (1 - 5 days absent)	118	14.4

It is obvious that a considerable amount of absenteeism was recorded for the early leavers in this study. In the 818 cases where records were available, 51.3% were absent 16 or more days in the year of school leaving. An additional 34.3% were absent at least six days. The level of absenteeism was not associated with the differences in reports about the time of school leaving, however.

Consultation Prior to Leaving School

Early leavers who were interviewed were asked if they had consulted with anyone prior to deciding to leave school. Over half (58.5%) reported consulting with someone about the decision to leave school, meaning that 41.5% consulted with no one. There was a somewhat greater tendency for the younger early leavers to talk to someone about the decision to leave. Those seeking advice were about four months younger (see Table 13).

Parents were the most frequently consulted, sought out by 77.7% of the 745 early leavers who reported talking over the decision with someone. Friends were next most frequently consulted (14.1%). A school

Table 13
Age of leavers seeking advice on leaving school
(N=1211)

Sought advice	Sample size	Average age
Yes	731	17.56
No	480	17.84

counsellor was consulted by 10.7%. This figure needs to take into account the poor access many students have to counsellors, and should be contrasted to the still lower numbers who said that they consulted a teacher or principal, 5.1% and 4.0% respectively (see Table 14).

Table 14
Sources consulted by early leavers about the decision leave school[1]

Source	Proportion of total[2]		Single source	
	N	% (N=745)	N	% (N=575)
Parent/guardian	579	77.7	459	79.8
Friend	105	14.1	41	7.1
School counsellor	80	10.7	36	6.3
Teacher	38	5.1	13	2.3
Principal	30	4.0	9	1.6
Immediate family	18	2.4	10	1.7
Relative	16	2.1	5	0.9
Social worker probation officer	4	0.5	1	0.2
Doctor	3	0.4	1	0.2

[1]529 persons, 41.6% of total sample did not consult any sources.

[2]Multiple responses included in analysis.

Most, 77.2% of those consulting anyone at all, reported consulting only one source. A few, 17.6% talked to more than one person, and 5.2% did not name anyone, even though they said that they had consulted someone (see Table 15). Of those consulting a single source (575), 82.4% relied on parents or other family; 7.1% went to friends; and 10.2% preferred a source at school (see Table 14, page 35).

Table 15
Number of sources consulted about the decision to leave school
(N=745)

Number of sources	Frequency	Percent
None mentioned	39	5.2
1	575	77.2
2	109	14.6
3	22	3.0

REASONS FOR LEAVING

Studies of early school leaving, this one included, invariably ask why the early leaver decided to leave school. In this study, the question was asked in two ways. The first was to ask the early leavers themselves in an open-ended fashion, with an invitation to the respondents to answer in their own words, giving as many reasons as they wished. In addition, the study also obtained reasons for early leaving as recorded by officials of the schools attended by the student. The record was from the form submitted by the school to the Department of Education when a person decides to leave school early. The information provided by these stock questions may not be very revealing of the true reasons for early leaving, yet a contrast of the perspectives of the school on the one hand, and the early leaver on the other, is quite instructive.

Official Report of Reasons

Officially, students leave school early for one or more of nine reasons. These are the categories that are included on the form used to report early leaving to the Department of Education. It was not possible to obtain this record for 421 (33%) of the 1274 persons interviewed in this study. In some instances the forms were not available, while in others, the field workers for the study were not able to contact the school before the end of the school year (see Table 16).

The school indicated only one reason for leaving in most cases where a reason was given (700, or 82.1%). Two or three reasons were indicated for the remainder of those for whom data were available.

Most frequently, in 49% of the cases for whom data were available, the school indicated simply that the decision to leave was because of lack of interest. Difficulty with the program was cited in 22% of the cases. A

Table 16
Number of reasons given by the school for early leaving
(N=1274)

Number	Frequency	Percent
No record available	421	33.0
One reason	700	54.9
Two reasons	142	11.1
Three reasons	11	0.9

few (2.5%) were said by the school to have assumed responsibilities in the home, while 16.6% of the females dropped out because of pregnancy. Fifteen and a half percent were said to have gained employment and 5.3%

were said to have attended another school. Other miscellaneous reasons were indicated for a further 5.3% of the early leavers.

Personnel in the school were also asked to consider factors beyond the reports, and give what they thought would be the true reason for school leaving. The distribution of reasons given in answer to this question was quite similar to the reasons reported officially.

Reasons Reported by Leavers

The reasons reported by the early leavers, themselves, differed in some respects from those given by the school in terms of the variety of reasons, and perhaps also in their implications. A total of 30 different categories of reasons were established from information obtained in the interviews. Although some categories were similar, there were important distinctions to be made among them. For example, a difference was seen between the persons who said that they had difficulty with one or two subjects, and those who said that they could not do the work of the grade.

While more than two-thirds of the early leavers (66.9%) gave only one reason for leaving, a substantial number, 32.8%, gave two or more reasons (see Table 17). There was a tendency for the leavers to be more detailed in their reasons than were the schools which gave more than one reason for leaving in about only 12% of the cases (see Table 16, page 37).

Table 17
Number of reasons given by early leavers
for early-leaving decision
(N=1274)

Number	Frequency	Percent
no reason given	4	0.3
one reason	852	66.9
two reasons	350	27.5
three reasons	68	5.3

The reasons for leaving that were given by the early leavers interviewed could be classified into five broad categories, which will be discussed briefly. School program-related reasons were given by 41.1% of the sample. Most of these leavers complained that the programs were dull and uninteresting. Fewer of these asserted that the programs they were in lacked relevance, that they were of no use, or a waste of time.

School performance-related reasons was another category that was mentioned frequently, in fact by 33% of those interviewed. While most of these cited difficulty doing the work, a fair number also mentioned difficulty with their behaviour or attitudes. Over 9% of the leavers said that they did not get along with the teachers or principal. A few said that they had been advised by their parents or teachers to leave the school, although they did not say why. There would appear to be a difference between academic and behavioral reasons, but this may be a matter of the perception of the leavers, and should be studied further (see Table 18).

Almost 21% of the early leavers said that they had a chance to get a job, and they made the decision to leave on that basis. This category was related to the next, the money-related category, which was given by 51, or 4% of the leavers. Only one of those who said that they had to help the family financially also said that they had a chance to get a job. However, only 14 of the 38 persons who said they wanted more spending money, or wanted to be self-supporting also said that they had a chance to get a job, so it may be that perception of job opportunity and actual financial outlook are not related reasons in the decision to leave.

A few people gave family-related reasons. In addition to the 14 who said that they needed a job to help the family, 47 stated that either they had family problems or they were needed to help at home. Once again, only one or two cited more than one reason from these categories. Additionally, females were disproportionately represented in this group.

A final major category was formed by the 29.4% who indicated some sort of "personal" reason for deciding to leave school. Included in this group were over 17% of the females interviewed who said that they

Table 18
Reasons given by early leavers for school - leaving decision
(N = 1274)

Reason	Frequency	Percent
School Program Related		
School was dull and uninteresting	433	33.9
Could not see the use of the school program	75	5.9
A waste of time	32	2.5
Could not see the use of school subjects	5	0.4
Sub-total	524	41.1
School Performance Related		
Could not do the work of the grade	208	16.3
Didn't get along with teachers/principal	118	9.3
Had difficulty with one or two courses	83	6.5
Fell behind because of poor attendance	19	1.5
Teacher/principal advised me to leave	11	0.9
Suspended from school	8	0.6
Parents advised me to leave	2	0.2
Sub-total	424	33.3
Employment Related		
Had a chance to find a job	266	20.9
Money Related		
Wanted more spending money	34	2.7
Needed a job to help family	14	1.1
Wanted to become self-supporting	4	0.3
Sub-total	51	4.0

(Continued next page)

Table 18 (Con't)

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Family Related		
Family problems	26	2.0
Needed to work at home	21	1.6
Sub-total	47	3.6
Personal Reasons		
Personal problems	87	6.8
Pregnancy	84	6.6 (17.4% of females)
Wanted to leave school	63	4.9
Too old	54	4.2
Poor health	25	2.0
Wanted to leave home	17	1.3
Friends were out of school	14	1.1
Wanted more freedom	8	0.6
Wanted to stay home	5	0.4
Wanted to get married	5	0.4
Wanted to travel	1	0.1
Other reasons	13	1.0
Sub-total	376	29.4
Don't Know	21	1.6

Note: The number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because several respondents named more than one reason for leaving.

decided to leave school because they were pregnant. A substantial number said that poor health or unspecified personal problems were the reasons they decided to leave school. Females were disproportionately represented in these groups as well. The reasons of a few were very non-descriptive,

Comparing School and Early Leaver Perspectives on Leaving

Comparisons of the two perspectives on reasons for early leaving are dangerous, particularly since the data were not obtained in the same way from each source. The standard form used by the schools does not encourage school officials to be specific and descriptive. "Lack of interest" is a case in point. Almost half of all early leavers were classified as lacking in interest in the programs they were taking in school. A large number of students, however, said that the programs were uninteresting, or not relevant. If the statement on the form accurately reflects the opinion of the administrators who filled it out, then there is an obvious difference in perspective that should not be overlooked. Each party attributes the problem to the other. Nonetheless, interest and relevance is a central issue for many leavers, regardless of the perspective taken. More superficially, it might be supposed that an immediate remedy would be to improve the level of interest of the content of some school programs. More fundamentally, however, it may be necessary to examine the perception of relevance, itself, as a basis for the motivation of learning.

In the area of personal reasons, school records do not provide a basis for comparison with the school leaver provided reasons, except for the specific reason of pregnancy, where there appeared to be approximate agreement between the two reports.

SECTION FOUR

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY LEAVER

AGE AND GRADE OF EARLY LEAVERS

In this section, the progress of the early leaver will be described in terms of the grade level of the leaver at the time of school leaving, and also in terms of the history of repeating. This will be related to the age of the school leaver.

The Time of Year Last Attended School

It has been known for some time that the summer months are the time when the largest number of decisions to leave school are taken. This has been confirmed by this study, which found that June was the last month of school attendance mentioned by 48% of the sample. This includes a few who said that they attended school during the summer (see Table 19).

The months of September and October show another small peak in the times when people decide to leave: 6.7% and 8.1%, respectively, left during these months. Four to six percent left school in each of the remaining months of the school year.

Table 19
Last month of attendance at school
as reported by the early school leaver
(N = 1274)

Month	No. of leavers	Percentage
January	63	5.0
February	69	5.5
March	78	6.2
April	68	5.4
May	60	4.7
June	610	48.3
July	4	.3
August	3	.2
September	85	6.7
October	103	8.1
November	69	5.5
December	52	4.1

The age of early leavers

As expected, early school leavers were above the average age for their grade placement at the time of leaving. The averages given here are likely to be inaccurate, however, because of the difficulty in determining the actual grade placement of the early leaver at the time of leaving. In this study, early leavers were asked their date of birth, the date they last attended school, and the grade they were in at the time of leaving. The following is based on their responses to these questions.

In grade nine, the average age of the early leavers in the sample was 16.8 years, not quite two years older than the age normally expected for their grade. For those in grade eight, the differential was even greater.

The average age of the grade eight leaver was 16.2 years, six months younger than the grade nine leavers. It is evident that many in the junior high school grades left as soon as they were legally allowed. It will be seen later that many had a history of failure (see Table 20).

Table 20
Grade by age at school leaving
(N=1274)

Grade	Sample size	Percent	Age at school leaving		
			Average	Median	Mode
Special Ed.	112	9.0	17.2	17.0	18.1
Work study	98	8.3	17.3	17.1	17.0
Grade 7	7	0.1	16.5	16.3	16.1
Grade 8	57	4.7	16.2	16.1	16.0
Grade 9	124	10.6	16.8	16.7	16.9
Level I	214	17.5	17.4	17.3	17.8
Level II	268	21.8	18.0	18.0	16.8
Level III	338	27.4	18.6	18.5	17.7

The age differential between the leavers and their classmates got smaller in the high school years. Persons who left in Level III averaged about 18.6 years old, and were not a great deal older than expected for that level. Because of the reorganization of the high school curriculum, the distinction between grades may also have had the effect of blurring social distinctions, making it easier for older persons to remain in school somewhat longer than their age mates.

In special education and work study, a considerable persistence was shown. Persons leaving these programs were an average of 17.2 years old, and would have been only somewhat younger than their contemporaries in the regular programs when they left. Persons in these programs generally have experienced less success than usual in the regular school program. These individuals had remained in school well beyond the school leaving age of 16.

Age is distributed quite broadly. One stereotype is that early leavers are relatively young when they decide to leave school, even though they are probably old for their grade. This stereotype does not fit the sample interviewed in general, even though it is true for some (see Table 21).

Table 21
Distribution of the age of the leaver at school-leaving time
(N=1240)

Age	Frequency	Percent
At or below 15	9	0.7
15.5	86	6.9
16.5	282	22.7
17.5	365	29.4
18.5	324	26.1
19.5	136	11.0
20.5	29	2.3
above 21	9	0.7

Mean = 17.69
Standard deviation = 1.21
Median = 17.72

Note: The age of 34 leavers could not be calculated

The average age of the school leavers in this sample was 17.7 years. The range of age was from 14 to 23 years old. Seven point six percent were below the legal school-leaving age of 16, yet 14% were 19 years old or older, which is beyond the age that people would normally remain in school.

The Educational Progress of the Early School Leavers

Specific program of the early leavers was not easy to determine. However, data were gathered on the grade levels attained and also on the grades repeated to show how, and to what extent, progress had been made in the school system.

Problems in estimating the educational progress of the early leaver

The primary method of estimating the educational progress of the early leaver is to determine the last grade level that the leaver successfully completed. Assumptions might then be made about the attainment of acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy. Possibly, these assumptions are not warranted, but no studies exist that define the educational attainments of early leavers in a more adequate way. The research problem, however, is that the organization of the Newfoundland school program creates difficulties when trying to classify student progress, especially when the procedures are based on student reports, as is the case here.

In the reorganized high school program, student progress is intended to be assessed in terms of the number and type of credits that are earned. One cannot pass or fail a level, only courses. It is indisputable, however, that students, and for that matter the school system, classify students according to their membership in a level. We assume, therefore, that high school students have reported their progress based on a rough relationship between their overall performance in a school year and their perception of their proper placement given that performance. Inferences cannot be

made about levels of literacy, numeracy, or any other specific competence from this information in the way that approximations can be made from the junior high school grades.

A second area contributing to the lack of clarity is in the distinction that must be made between the regular program, and special programs -- in particular, special education and workstudy. These programs are organized and administered differently in different schools and districts. They are not equally available across the Province. While considerable progress has been made in standardizing policy, criteria for assignment to these programs, and program objectives differ from district to district. In particular, a policy of assignment to the least restrictive environment often leads to a mix of programming involving both special and regular instruction. Students may not always be able to say in just what kind of placement they actually are.

The matter would be easily settled if one could know the kind of certificate or diploma that would be awarded upon successful completion of the program. Students cannot report this reliably, however. Furthermore, passing or failing is not possible in either special education or work study, except in the sense of a general assessment that the student cannot profit further through continued participation. Estimates of educational progress clearly cannot be made for persons who are classified in these programs except to say that they would likely possess lower levels of literacy and numeracy than expected for their age.

Social promotion also is a practice that makes it difficult to gauge the educational progress of students. Older students who have failed a number of times are sometimes passed into a higher grade in order to keep them with their age-mates, or in order to give them access to programs that might be more suitable for persons of their age, for example, work study.

In spite of these difficulties, the status of the early leavers in their school programs was examined in two ways: first, the grades that leavers

reported having to repeat; and second, the pattern of success in school at the time of leaving.

Grades repeated

Each person in the sample was asked to tell if he or she had repeated a grade at some time during their school experience, whether they had repeated more than one grade, and which grades had been repeated. There are some limitations in assessing school success based on this information. First, the information must be interpreted somewhat differently than a report on the grades that were failed. A grade could have been failed, but not repeated. The information does not account for social promotion, or advanced placement. It does not deal with the problem of assessing progress in high school, where failure can be limited to a few courses in a given year. However, information on the repetition of grades has the advantages of being both easy to document and reliable, particularly with the junior high school students, and for this reason was examined in this study.

A total of 68.9 % of leavers reported some school failure. Almost forty percent (39.6%) of all the leavers reported having repeated one grade. An additional 29.3% reported repeating more than one grade. The early leaver is frequently stereotyped as a person who has experienced failure, and this does seem to characterize the majority of our sample. Turning this around, however, it may be seen that a significant portion of the sample interviewed, 31.1%, reported that they had not repeated any grades through their school experience until the time of leaving. As will be seen, however, it may be incorrect to conclude that these people had not experienced failure (see Table 22).

Persons leaving early from junior high school had the highest rate of repeating. Of this group, 92.5% had repeated at least once, and 50.3% of them had repeated more than once.

Table 22
School level at time of school leaving
by number of grades repeated
(N=1250)

School level	Number of grades repeated			Row total
	None	One	More than 1 repeated	
Special Ed.				
Freq.	55	86	75	216
%	25.5	39.8	34.7	17.3
Junior high				
Freq.	15	84	100	199
%	7.5	42.2	50.3	15.9
Senior high				
Freq.	319	325	191	835
%	38.2	38.9	22.9	66.8
Column total				
Freq.	389	495	366	1250
%	31.1	39.6	29.3	100.0

In the senior high levels the numbers of persons reporting that they had repeated grades dropped. Overall, 61.8% had repeated at least once, with 22.9% repeating two or more times. A large number of the senior high school leavers (38.2%) reported that they had never repeated a grade. As might be expected, those attaining the higher levels of senior high school reported the least failure of all. Eighteen point three percent of the leavers from Level I reported never having repeated a grade. By Level III, the number of leavers who said that they had never repeated rose in the sample to 52.8% of those leaving early at that level. Of the 219 in Level I, 35.6% reported repeating more than one grade. By Level III, only 12.2% of the 343 in that category had repeated more than once (see Table 23).

Table 23
Grade at school leaving by number of grades repeated
(N=1250)

Grade at school leaving	Number of grades repeated: None repeated	1 repeated	More than 1 repeated	Row total
Special Ed.				
Freq.	32	38	42	112
%	28.6	33.9	37.5	9.0
Work-study				
Freq.	23	48	33	104
%	22.1	46.2	31.7	8.3
Grade 7				
Freq.	1	3	4	8
%	12.5	37.5	50.0	.6
Grade 8				
Freq.	7	19	33	59
%	11.9	32.2	55.9	4.7
Grade 9				
Freq.	7	62	63	132
%	5.3	47.0	47.7	10.6
Level I				
Freq.	40	101	78	219
%	18.3	46.1	35.6	17.5
Level II				
Freq.	98	104	71	273
%	35.9	38.1	26.0	21.8
Level III				
Freq.	181	120	42	343
%	52.8	35.0	12.2	27.4
Column total				
Freq.	389	495	366	1250
%	31.1	39.6	29.3	100.0

The incidence of reported failure of leavers in special education and work study has been given here. Almost by definition, these special programs are populated by persons who have not experienced success in the regular school programs. However, the persons in these programs have had a wide variety of educational experiences, from programs completely isolated from the regular programs, to programs that are very closely integrated with the regular stream. Under such circumstances it is difficult to interpret a report about a repeated grade or to tell when it occurred, relative to assignment to the special program.

From the reports of the early leavers who repeated grades, it became apparent that the junior high school years were the most troublesome, with 62.5% having repeated at least one of those grades. The most frequently

Table 24
Grades reported repeated by early leavers
(N=877)

Grade	Frequency	Percent
One	49	5.6
Two	72	8.2
Three	94	10.7
Four	107	12.2
Five	99	11.3
Six	124	14.1
Seven	269	30.7
Eight	183	20.9
Nine	187	21.3
Level I	35	4.0
Level II	15	1.7
Level III	11	1.3

repeated was grade seven, which was repeated by 30.7% of everyone repeating a grade. A fair number of the repeaters had difficulty in the elementary years, as well, but very few reported repeating any of the high school levels (see Table 24).

It has already been noted that a person cannot "fail" a level in the reorganized high school. Thus, when considering the low rate of reported failure in those years, the ambiguity of the question has to be considered. Some students may have failed or dropped courses which they did not subsequently repeat or report as failed. Having said that, the reported rate of repeating by early leavers in the high school years is still the lowest of all the levels of school, while the rate of school leaving during these same years is the highest. Further analysis suggested that early leavers in high school were not enjoying the rate of success that was implied in the low levels of repeating that were reported.

Success patterns at the time of school leaving

Grade assignment at school leaving time. The grade assignment of the leaver at the time of leaving was obtained from the leaver during the interview. The result was modified to be consistent with leaver reports that they were assigned to special education or work study. In the sample, most of the early leavers reported that they were in the senior high school grades at the time of leaving. A total of 66.9% of all leavers said that they were in either Level I, II, or III. In addition, 80 of the 216 special education and work study students also said that they were in one of the levels of high school. Of the remainder of the leavers interviewed, 15.9% said that they were in the junior high school grades (see Table 25).

One interesting observation is that while 216 persons classified themselves as being in special education or work study, fully 156 of them also classified themselves into a grade level. This probably reflects the highly variable nature of these special programs, and the movement toward mainstreaming, but it also suggests that these people have a strong identification with their age-mates in the regular stream of the schools.

Table 25
Grade at time of school leaving
(N = 1250)

Grade	Frequency	Percent
Sp Ed	112	9.0
Wk St	104	8.3
Gr 7	8	0.6
Gr 8	59	4.7
Gr 9	132	10.6
Level I	219	17.5
Level II	273	22.0
Level III	343	27.4

The 17.3% who said that they were in special education or work study should be considered as a special case. As described earlier, the non-standard placement and objectives of these programs, especially in the upper age groups, means that their classification as early leavers is open to question. The function of schooling for these people simply has not been determined. The decision to classify them as early leavers is therefore based on the perception of the local school administrators about the possible usefulness of further schooling for the persons who make decisions to leave school while assigned to these programs.

In a study of the process of school leaving, it is useful to contemplate the educational experience the leaver was having at the time of leaving. This stage of the analysis used information gained in the interview about the last grade reported as passed by the early leaver, the grade that the early leaver was in at the time the decision was made to leave, and the month of the year the leaver reported last attending school.

Since half of all leavers left over the summer, the question arose about the level of schooling actually experienced last when a person reported the

grade they were in at the time of leaving. For example, when considering the school most likely to influence the school leaving decision, about half of those in Level I, about 9% of all the leavers, left over the summer. Which experience, grade nine, or grade ten (Level I), should be looked at in evaluating the actions of these leavers?

School success latency. A construct called the school success latency was defined to help describe the school experience of the respondents just prior to the decision to leave school. Two factors were taken into consideration: first, the difference between the grade level the respondents said that they were in at the time of leaving, and the last grade that they said they had passed; and second, whether the respondents reported leaving school over the summer (summer leaver), or sometime during the regular school year (winter leaver). A summer leaver was one who last attended school in June, July or August.

Most (147 of the 216) persons in work study or special education who also reported grade levels passed and attended were included when school success latency was defined. It was possible to compute school success latency for 1156 of the 1274 persons interviewed. Sixty-nine of the remaining 118 had reported themselves to be in a special program, and did not say that they were in a particular grade.

School success latency can then be interpreted as a measure of the persistence in school of early leavers from their last successful year (that is, the last grade passed) until they decided to leave. Several different categories of persistence emerged in the analysis.

Category 0. A very few (12) of the respondents said that they returned to school in the same grade that they had last passed before deciding to leave during the school year. There is no immediate explanation of these reports, although it is worth noting that no report of the date of school leaving was available from the school for any of them. Ordinarily, this type of report might have been expected from persons in special, non-graded programs, but only two of the 12 classified themselves in this way.

Category 1. One hundred and fifteen persons, 9.9% of those with success latency classifications that met the criteria for analysis, said that they decided to leave school during the summer immediately following the completion of a successful school year. In general, only 11% to 15% of the leavers from each of special education, work study, and grades eight, nine, Levels I and II, reported leaving after a successful year. All of the remaining early leavers returned to school at this time. Conventional wisdom has it that persons who leave during the summer do so because they are seduced by employment opportunity or other, more desirable activities. These data suggest that this is likely to be the case, at least initially, for only a minority of all the early leavers, and only 20.8% of all summer leavers.

Category 2. A large number (42.9%) of the early leavers left during the school year following a successful year. The group that appeared most at risk at this stage were those persons who made the transition from grade nine to Level I. Fifty-six point two percent of persons who left from Level I did so at this time. The risk at this stage was lowest for those in Level III (32%). Most persons in Level III who eventually left early persisted through the year if they were successful in the previous year. The least persistent were those in Level I, and a number of reasons can be advanced for this related to the change experienced from junior to senior high school. These changes may be related to academic performance as well as changes in the environmental press of the school. At this time, however, there is no evidence to suggest what the specific reasons for leaving might have been (see Table 26).

Category 3. Another large group of 384, 33.1% of all the early leavers, made the decision to leave during the summer following an apparently unsuccessful year. The most salient of this group were 53% of all persons in Level III who decided to leave before completing school. This group, the largest risk category of all, without a doubt included numbers of persons who either failed public examinations or decided not to take them.

Table 26
The school success latency of the early leaver contrasted to the last grade level in actual attendance (N = 1159)

Latency Category	Sp Ed	Wk St	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Level I	Level II	Level III	Row Total
0 Freq.	2	0	1	1	2	4	2	0	12
%	2.4	0.0	14.3	1.7	1.6	1.8	0.8	0	1.0
1 Freq.	13	10	2	9	14	31	36	0	115
%	15.7	15.6	28.6	15.3	11.0	14.3	13.6	0	9.9
2 Freq.	30	31	1	23	64	122	118	108	497
%	36.1	48.4	14.3	39.0	50.4	56.2	44.7	32.0	42.9
3 Freq.	25	17	3	19	30	41	69	180	384
%	30.1	26.6	42.9	32.2	23.6	18.9	26.1	53.3	33.1
4 Freq.	8	3	0	2	10	12	29	33	97
%	9.6	4.7	0	3.4	7.9	5.5	11.0	9.8	8.4
5 Freq.	5	3	0	5	7	7	10	17	54
%	6.0	4.7	0	8.5	5.5	3.2	3.8	5.0	4.7
Column Total									
Freq.	83	64	7	59	127	217	264	338	1159
%	7.2*	5.5	0.6	5.1	11.0	18.7	22.8	29.2	100.0

(0) No difference between last grade attended and last grade passed, but the person reports school leaving during the school year. There is no school record of time of leaving for any of these persons.
(1) Successfully completed year, dropped out over the summer.
(2) Successfully completed previous year, returned the next year, and dropped out during the school year.
(3) Successfully completed the previous year, returned and persisted the entire next year, dropped out over the summer.
(4) Had an unsuccessful year, returned the next year, but dropped out during the school year.
(5) Had an unsuccessful year, returned the next year, persisted, but dropped out over the summer.

Categories 4 and 5. The two remaining success latency categories have to be viewed somewhat tentatively, since by definition, the persons involved stated in the interview that when they decided to leave they were in a grade that was two levels above the last grade that they passed. Only a small number of all the early leavers (13.1%) classified themselves in this fashion. There are three interpretations. First, success latencies have been confounded so that persons who were repeating a grade could have classified themselves into categories two and three as well as into categories four and five. The second interpretation is that the ambiguity of assignment into special programs and into high school allowed early leavers to classify themselves according to their age placement, rather than their academic progress. A third possibility was that some of these individuals were examples of either social promotion or advanced grade placements. An initial analysis suggests that persons classifying themselves as repeaters in a grade level, also belonged to success latency categories one, two and three. The best interpretation of persons in categories four and five would be that they are persons who have persisted for at least one year without full success at the previous grade, most of whom leave during the following school year. Only a few persisted for the entire second year.

MOTIVATION

In the previous section, it could be seen that some persons, ostensibly successful in high school, nonetheless were deciding to leave without completing their secondary education. In any consideration of the courses of action elected by the early leavers, motivation must be a major factor to consider, especially when confronted with an inconsistency such as this. The importance of motivation extends beyond the decision to leave, to include earlier interaction at school, perhaps associated with failure, and school leaving.

Often educators view motivation in the context of interest and engagement in the educational enterprise, itself. Evidence of this can be seen in the early leaver report form, listing lack of interest in the program as one of the reasons that can be given for early leaving. More often, however, leavers referred to the relevance of school programs, raising the more basic question of the role that they believe is played by education in meeting their more fundamental needs.

Interviewees were asked to make choices that would discriminate the level of importance that they attached to motivating factors related to security, social needs and fulfilment. Respondents were asked to choose the more important of two possibilities, for example, "Live close to family" or "Get a good paying full-time job". Questions such as these tend to attract responses in the direction of social expectancy. It is interesting, therefore, when the responses drift in other directions, which was the case in this survey. Our culture teaches the value of work to secure one's livelihood, and work to provide fulfillment. Leavers reflected those values for the most part, but significant numbers of them chose social values instead (see Table 27).

The questions were presented in pairs, with a security question paired with a fulfillment question, social with security, and so forth, for the various possible combinations. The respondents were asked to choose the most important of each pair, which was the one scored. Scores for each factor were analyzed in a way which yielded a range of scores from 1 to 4. Security was generally ranked the highest with a mean of 3.0. Fulfillment was ranked next, and ranked almost as high, with a mean of 2.85. Social needs were ranked last, with a mean of 1.62.

The variation in scores was different for the different motivational factors. Social needs scores were considerably more variable than either the Security or Fulfillment needs scores. This indicates that there tended to be wider differences between the early leavers on the Social scale, than on the other scales, and suggests that social needs were much more important for some than for others.

Table 27
Distribution of responses to the motivation questions
(N = 1274)

Question Pair	Motivation Type	Percent
Live close to family	Social	17.3
or	or	
Get a good paying full time job	Security	82.7
Take a job that is interesting	Fulfillment	61.4
or	or	
Work steadily for good money	Security	38.6
Work near family and friends	Social	25.7
or	or	
Work at an interesting job	Fulfillment	74.3
Be unemployed for a while	Social	20.0
or	or	
Work away from home	Security	80.0
Be my own boss	Fulfillment	50.1
or		
Work for someone else		49.9

Motivation scale mean scores using Low = 1 to High = 4

Scale	Mean	S.D.
Security	3.02	0.79
Social	1.62	1.63
Fulfillment	2.85	0.87

An examination of the intercorrelations of the scales shows negative correlations, expected for this sort of data as scores trade off against each other. The relatively high correlations of security and fulfillment with social, and the relatively low correlation of security with fulfillment suggests that for the majority, social factors are traded against the others. For most, security will be the most important. This should perhaps be

interpreted against the expectations held for finding employment. More important is that while both security and fulfillment were ranked high, a decision to leave school was taken nonetheless, suggesting that the satisfaction of these needs may not be associated with the continuation of schooling for many people.

SELF-CONCEPT

The self-concept is implicated in almost all discussions of early school leaving on both theoretical and practical levels. It is believed that a person's self-concept will likely influence the type of job that they apply for, or the level of education that they choose to pursue. It is important to avoid oversimplifying the nature of the self-concept, its development, and the role that it may play in the decision to leave school and to subsequently integrate into the economy.

The self-concept is the structure of beliefs that people have about themselves, their physical and mental abilities, personality, social standing, interpersonal skills, and ability to perform. These beliefs are thought to form the basis for action. If people believe that they are able to do something, then they are more likely to try to do it, for example, apply for a good-paying job, or apply to go to university. In this study, the interviewees were asked how they perceived themselves as learners, about the learning styles that they preferred, and finally, about their ability to learn different kinds of jobs.

Academic Self-concept

Most (90.5%) of the leavers interviewed said that they would be able to pass if they were to work in school. There were some differences depending on the level of schooling of the leavers. Students in special

programs or in junior high school were somewhat more likely to say that they would be unable to pass than were students in high school (see Table 28).

Table 28
Perception of ability to pass in school
(N=1246)

Ability to pass	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1128	90.5
No	118	9.5

Most of the interviewed leavers were also fairly confident of their ability to compete academically with their peers. Only 20.5% said that most students would do better than they would in school, while 58.9% said that half of their classmates would do better. An additional 20.6% said that only a few students would do better than they would if they applied themselves.

All in all, the leavers viewed themselves academically as being a fairly typical group, and this was quite probably the case. Self-ratings are quite robust when compared with teacher ratings of ability and performance. What is missing in these data is a sense of the level of commitment of the leavers to these beliefs. The responses to questions such as these are often intellectualized in the process of responding, and may not represent the true bases upon which the leavers behave.

The Preferred Learning Style

The self-concept also reflects the view that persons take of the ways that they can learn, given that learning takes place in all contexts, and in a variety of ways. Often, early leavers are stereotyped as being "hands on" people, happiest actually working in concrete, real life situations. In some ways, this view of the early leaver was confirmed in this study (see Table 29).

Table 29
Early leavers' preferred learning style
(N = 1241)

Style	Frequency	Percentage
On your own, from books	100	8.1
Watching others do it	215	17.3
Taking courses	210	16.9
Helping someone on the job	716	57.7

The largest portion (57.7%) of those interviewed said that they learned best by helping someone on the job. Only 8.1% said that they learned best on their own, from books. One goal of education, of course, is to develop this sort of independent learning style in the student. Taking courses, or watching someone else, was preferred about equally by 16-17% each. Both are relatively passive learning situations, differing perhaps in the way that they are structured.

While most said that they preferred active participation in the real life situation, a significant number of leavers preferred learning modalities more typical of school. In addition, it would be premature to conclude that it was the real life involvement that attracted the majority. It could be that they find the close personal involvement with people in the job situation to be the important factor. Another possibility is that many require learning situations characterized by close, intimate support from the instructor.

Vocational Self-concept

The vocational self-concept of the early leaver is deserving of study by itself. A broad survey, such as the present study, does not do the subject justice. Vocational self-concept deals with the view people have of themselves as workers, and this view can be seen to be very complex. In this study, vocational self-concept was limited to the perception of ability to learn to do jobs requiring varying levels of training and general ability.

Subjects were presented with a list of 12 occupations and asked how easy, or how difficult they would find it to learn to fill that occupation. The jobs were selected on the basis of the Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) and General Educational Development (GED) requirements listed in the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations (CCDO), to range from undemanding to demanding in terms of general educational development and training. Occupations were chosen that were familiar to populations in Newfoundland, and an attempt was made to include jobs traditionally occupied by each gender, when gender neutral occupations could not be found.

The overall ranking of the occupations was examined first, in terms of the proportion of those interviewed who believed that they would find it difficult to learn the occupation. The actual order of the ranking conformed to expectation based on the levels of ability and training required. This tended to confirm that in general, the occupations were known and understood by the leavers, and that they had a generally realistic perception of the job requirements of the vocations listed. What is interesting is that while the more demanding jobs were seen in that way by the majority of the early leavers, a number said that they would find the jobs easy, or very easy to learn. The opposite was also true with a considerable number of the early leavers saying that they would find even the least demanding of the jobs to be difficult to learn.

Dentist was viewed by the largest number, 92.8%, as the vocation they would have the most difficulty learning. Following this, about 80% of the sample thought they would have difficulty learning to be a teacher, nurse or naval architect. All these occupations are probably known to require post secondary education whereas all the others on the list could be seen by some to be learned on the job. Store manager and electrician were perceived in the middle range of difficulty, while the most familiar of the jobs, store clerk, fish plant worker and cook were thought by most to be the least difficult for them to learn.

An obvious problem in the interpretation of this information is that little is known about the way the respondents actually understood the occupations on the list. As an example, the occupation of cook was believed by most to be an easy occupation to learn while learning to be an electrician was thought to be a more difficult proposition. "Cook", as does "electrician", covers an extremely broad occupational range, however, so that most persons with an aspiration to be cooks could do so at a level that would be challenging and satisfying (see Table 30).

Table 30
Ranking of occupations by early leavers relative to ease of learning
(N = 1274)

	Ease of learning (%)		
Occupation	Very easy	Easy	Difficult
Dentist	0.3	6.8	92.8
Naval architect	2.0	17.0	81.0
Nurse	1.3	19.5	79.1
Teacher	1.8	20.9	77.2
Manager of a store	4.1	32.7	63.2
Electrician	5.9	47.1	47.0
Deck hand on a trawler	17.5	49.3	33.3
Typist	3.1	53.8	33.2
Truck driver	3.2	51.1	16.7
Clerk in a store	31.4	58.5	10.1
Cook	33.8	56.8	9.5
Fish plant worker	39.7	52.0	8.2

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS

All interviewees were asked if they had problems that concerned them when they looked for work. They indicated their feelings about a list of problems which included problems about knowledge, education and training, and personal attributes. Their feelings about their problems constituted another indicator of their beliefs about their ability to successfully compete for work.

They were asked to respond to each problem area in terms of whether they were "not bothered", "bothered a bit", or "bothered a lot" by that possible problem. An overall score was obtained by ranking each of the possible responses, and summing the responses to each problem. The total scores could then range from a minimum of nine, to a maximum of 27. A higher score, closer to the maximum of 27, indicated leavers who tended to perceive several problem areas, while lower scores, closer to the minimum of 9, indicated leavers who tended to perceive fewer problems.

Considering first the overall perception of problems, most people perceived at least a few problems related to the job hunt. Only 2.2% said they were not bothered at all by any problem in the nine areas queried in the interview (see Table 31).

A fair level of concern about problems was expressed. As many as 48.4% had a total score higher than 14, indicating that they were bothered a bit, or a lot, by problems in five or more of the nine problem areas considered. A few persons expressed a great deal of concern, with about 10% being bothered a bit, or a lot by seven or more of the items.

Specific Problem Areas

There were interesting differences in the areas of concern of the persons interviewed. In general, the interviewees expressed fewest concerns about themselves as persons, and most concern about the availability of work and factors associated with their ability to access the job market.

Table 31
Total Score: Are there things about yourself that bother you when looking for a job?
(N = 1267)

Score	Frequency	Percent
9	28	2.2
10	57	4.5
11	115	9.1
12	127	10.0
13	158	12.5
14	169	13.3
15	151	11.9
16	134	10.6
17	92	7.3
18	85	6.7
19	55	4.3
20	33	2.6
21	25	2.0
22	16	1.3
23	7	0.6
24	8	0.6
25	6	0.5
26	0	0.0
27	1	0.1

Mean = 14.7167 Standard Deviation = 3.1569 Median = 14

Note: Low scores indicate "relatively unbothered", based on the nine items listed in table 24.

The areas of least concern were personality and personal appearance. It is perhaps exceptional that as many as 24% of those interviewed admitted to being bothered a little, or a lot, in these areas. The interpretation of the response to this question could be ambiguous. It could be either that most see themselves to have strengths in these areas, or it could be that, most see these areas to be unimportant in the employment market. However, the suggestion of perceived strengths in these areas is consistent with information to be presented later concerning the perceived importance of personal factors in job search and job holding (see Table 32).

Table 32
When looking for work, are there things that bother you?
(N =1267)

Item	Not bothered (%)	Bothered a bit (%)	Bothered a lot (%)
Having enough education	17.5	40.9	40.8
Knowing where to look to find a job	34.2	48.9	16.2
Leaving home	51.7	35.2	12.5
Getting a job you like	39.7	47.6	11.9
Finding work you can do	44.1	43.2	11.9
Getting good references	59.0	30.0	9.5
Knowing the right people	47.2	42.6	9.2
The way you look	75.4	18.9	5.1
Your personality	75.2	19.4	4.7

Having enough education was the area of most concern, with 40.8% bothered a lot about this. Another 40.9% were bothered a little. It is interesting that 17.5% were not bothered at all. The paradox of this, of course, is that the same persons expressing concern about their lack of

education only recently decided to leave the educational system. No doubt, for some, their response simply was made in what they perceived to be the socially expected direction. For others, however, the issue could be the need for appropriate or qualifying education that is the concern, suggesting that the perceived relevance of the public school education was a major question.

Knowing where to look for a job was a concern for the majority, with 65.1% being bothered a little, or a lot by this. The prospects of getting a job that they liked was also bothering about 59.5%. There were concerns in other areas held by 40 to 50% of the interviewees, such as finding work that they could do, leaving home, and knowing the right people.

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE LABOUR AND EDUCATION MARKET

One of the factors governing search activity in both the labour and education markets will be the way that these markets are perceived. If people believe that there are no jobs available, then they may be less likely to look for work, regardless of the true state of the job market. The perception of the location of the jobs will also have a bearing on search activity. The same considerations will be true of search for training and educational opportunities. The early leavers in the study were asked a number of questions to gain some insight into their perceptions of these aspects of their labour market experience.

Knowledge and Perception of the Job Market

The respondents were asked to relate themselves to the job market. They were asked about the location and availability of jobs for which they could qualify, and then asked about the nature of the jobs. Again in general, more of the respondents believed that there was work available near home

than believed in the availability of work elsewhere in the province. On the other hand, most felt that there was available work outside Newfoundland.

With respect to jobs at home, 60.1% of those interviewed said that there were jobs in their community that they could do. Of the remainder, 29.7% said that there were no jobs in their community, while 9.1% did not know (see Table 33). It is worth noting that 9.1% of those saying that there were jobs available were unable to name one of these jobs. The jobs that were named were the traditional jobs available in fishing, retail, and construction.

Table 33
Are there jobs in your community that you could do?
(N=1274)

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	768	60.1
No	378	29.7
Don't know	116	9.1
No response	12	.9

Table 34
If there are jobs in the community you can do, are any jobs open right now?
(N=768)

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	44	5.7
No	45	5.9
No response	679	88.4

Of those who said that there were jobs in the community that they could do (768), only 44, or 5.7% of these said that there were jobs actually available. Also, as can be seen in Table 34, another 5.9% said that none were open. The remainder, 88.4%, made no response, and are presumed either not to have known about job availability or to have preferred not to respond for some reason. There was a clear belief that there were poor prospects for employment locally.

There was a significant relationship between reported employment status and reports that there were jobs in the community that could be done by the respondent. As can be seen in Table 35, over half (51.5%) of those

Table 35
Are there jobs in the community that you can do, crosstabulated by employment status
(N=1240)

	Employment status		
Jobs in the community	Employed	Unemployed	Row total
Yes			
Freq.	390	367	757
%	69.9 *	53.8 *	61.0
	(51.5%)*	(48.5%)*	
No			
Freq.	121	250	371
%	21.7 *	36.7	29.9
	(32.6%)**	(67.4%)**	
Don't know			
Freq.	47	65	112
%	8.4 *	9.5 *	9.0
	(42.0%)**	(58.0%)**	
Column total			
Freq.	558	682	1240
%	45.0	55.0	100.0

* % Employment status
** % job availability perception

saying that there were local jobs that they could do were employed compared to 32.6% of those reporting that there were no jobs of that type in their community. Significantly, only 42% of those who did not know about job availability were employed. Most interestingly, there were 20 persons who said there was work available in the community, yet who also reported being unemployed.

Of the unemployed, those who said that there were jobs they could do in their community reported somewhat more activity in applying for work. Forty-five point two percent reported having made no job applications,

Table 36
Job applications related to jobs in the community that a respondent could do (N=682)

	Number of job applications					
Jobs in the community	None	1	2	3	More than 4	Row total
Yes						
Freq.	166	38	43	25	95	367
%	45.2	10.4	11.7	6.8	25.9	53.8
No						
Freq.	129	26	22	16	57	250
%	51.6	10.4	8.8	6.4	22.8	36.7
Don't know						
Freq.	42	14	4	2	3	65
%	64.6	21.5	6.2	3.1	4.6	9.5
Column total						
Freq.	337	78	69	43	155	682
%	49.4	11.4	10.1	6.3	22.7	100.0

compared to 51.6% of those who said that there were no jobs. These statistics reveal a population that believes that there is work to be done but which has not made an effort to obtain the work. Further, there is another population which has reported pursuing work, yet did not believe it was available. In the latter case, the failure of job search may have contributed to the belief. Bearing in mind that almost no one reported knowing if any jobs were actually available, 64.6% of the unemployed who said that they did not know if there were jobs they could do also reported making no job applications, lending credence to the suggestion that belief in job availability locally is related to the extent of search (see Table 36).

Jobs elsewhere in Newfoundland

When asked about the availability of work elsewhere in Newfoundland, the picture changed. About half of the early leavers (49.7% compared to 50.3%) said that there were jobs they could do in other parts of the province (see Table 37). There was also considerably more uncertainty.

Table 37
Is there work elsewhere in Newfoundland that you could do?
(N=1273)

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	633	49.7
No	88	6.9
Don't know	541	42.5
No response	11	0.9

While only 6.9% said that there were no jobs that they could do elsewhere, 43.4% said that they did not know or made no response. This seems to reflect on the knowledge of the nature of work that is actually available, the respondent's familiarity with the employment picture around home, and the respondent's perception of the factors at play in actually obtaining work. Given the apparent reliance of the early leavers on

personal factors in the job search process, perhaps there is a presumption that search is less likely to be successful outside the home area because they will not have the same personal contacts.

These responses were related to the early leavers expectations about place of residence in 2-3 years time. Those who thought that they would be living elsewhere in Newfoundland expressed more certainty about the availability of work in other places (59.1% compared to 47.1%). Fewer of these (30.9% compared to 48.1%) people also responded that they did not know about the availability of work elsewhere (see Table 38).

Table 38
Perception of work availability in Newfoundland related to expectations about where early school leaver will be living (N=1255)

	Where expected to live in 2-3 years time						
Work available elsewhere	Near home	Else where in NF.	Labra-dor	Main -land	Don't know	Don't care	Row total
Yes							
Freq.	226	65	10	172	17	8	628
%	47.1	59.1	52.6	51.3	49.0	72.7	50.0
No							
Freq.	23	11	1	31	20	0	86
%	4.8	10.0	5.3	9.3	6.7	.0	6.9
Don't know							
Freq.	231	34	8	132	133	3	541
%	48.1	30.9	42.1	39.4	44.3	27.3	43.1
Column total							
Freq.	480	110	19	335	300	11	1255
%	38.2	8.8	1.5	26.7	23.9	.9	100.0

The responses were also related to the level of social motivation of the early leavers. Those who did not know about the availability of work they could do, or said that there was no work that they could do elsewhere, had a higher level of social motivation than those who said that there was work available elsewhere. This suggests that those who believe that they will not find work elsewhere may also tend to be persons with firmer ties to home and family. The beliefs of their networks of family and friends may be of some importance in understanding them (see Table 39).

Table 39
Level of social motivation by the perception of work availability elsewhere in Newfoundland (N=1260)

Perception of work availability	Sample size	Average social motivation score
Yes	632	1.56
No	88	1.48
Don't know	540	1.73

Locus of control was also related to the perception of work availability elsewhere in Newfoundland. Those who responded that they did not know about the availability of work elsewhere had a significantly higher level of external control than those who said that work was available. They were more likely to believe that they were unable to do much themselves about obtaining employment (see Table 40).

Jobs on the mainland

Respondents tended to view the job prospects on the mainland with more certainty. In fact 68.5% felt that work that they could do was available on the mainland, while only 2% said that it was not. The level of uncertainty was lower, with 29.5% either saying that they did not know or making no response to this question (see Table 41).

Table 40
Locus of control related to perception of the availability of work elsewhere in Newfoundland (N=1262)

Perception of work availability	Sample size	Average level internal locus of control
Yes	633	8.81
No	88	8.86
Don't know	541	8.53

Table 41
Is there work on the mainland that you could do? (N=1273)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	872	68.5
No	25	2.0
Don't know	357	28.0
No response	19	1.5

Starting a business

Part of the Province's strategy for economic recovery is a focus on the encouragement of new, small enterprises, particularly in rural areas. In addition, some of the conventional wisdom describes the early leaver as a person who chafes under the restraints found in school, but who is well suited to compete in the business world. The leavers in this study were asked if they would be able to start a business of their own, and if so, what that business would be.

A fair number, 33.4% of the respondents, said that they would be able to start a business of their own. However, 48.1% said they would not be able to, and 18.5% made no response, or said that they did not know (see Table 42).

Table 42
Could you start a business of your own?
(N=1274)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	425	33.4
No	613	48.1
Don't know	231	18.1
No response	5	.4

For the most part, fairly routine businesses were named, although 15.3% of those saying that they would start a business did not know or made no response when asked what the business would be. Very few, 1.6%, said they would start up a fishing venture. Food service and retail trade were the most commonly named business, for a total of 32.0% of all those saying they could start a business. An additional 26.6% said that they would start up construction or mechanics businesses (see Table 43).

In general, those leavers with a business orientation had a conventional, and even traditional view of the ventures they were capable of starting. These businesses are commonly associated, particularly in rural areas, with individual enterprise of a type requiring skills that are normally acquired away from school.

Knowledge and Perception of Education and Training Opportunity

A fair number of the early leavers who were interviewed expressed concerns about their level of education and training. Many, as will be seen, said that they had plans to return to school. During the interview,

Table 43
What business would you start?
(N=344)

Business	Frequency	Percent
Retail	99	23.3
Construction	71	16.7
Mechanic	42	9.9
Food related	37	8.7
Hairdresser	28	6.6
Trucking	12	2.8
Babysitting	9	2.1
Arcade	8	1.8
Woods	7	1.6
Fishing	7	1.6
Repair work	6	1.4
Housekeeping	4	.9
Tourist information	4	.9
Car wash	3	.7
Gym	3	.7
Fashion design	2	.5
Aquaculture	2	.5
Home care	2	.5
Laundromat	2	.5
Don't know	36	8.5
No response	29	6.8

they were asked several questions to estimate their knowledge of the ways to improve their educational and training levels, and the sources of help open to them to find out more about this.

Finding information about education and training

Most persons named at least one source of information and training (65.1%), and a number (33.1%) named more than one. However, many (34.8%) were unable to name at least one source of information and help about further training or education. Two percent of these failed to provide a response of some kind to this question. Only 11.6% were able to name three or more places to go or people to see about education and training opportunities (see Table 44).

Table 44
Number of sources of information or help about training and education named by early leavers
(N=1274)

Number of sources named	Frequency	Percent
1	408	32.0
2	274	21.5
3	126	9.9
4	19	1.5
5	3	.2
Don't know	418	32.8
No response	26	2.0

A number of categories of help (sources of information) were mentioned by the leavers, and it was not surprising that CEIC was named most frequently. In fact, 34.7% of all respondents named this source, and it represented the single resource for 35.3% of the 408 persons naming only one source. The problem with the reliance on the CEIC centres, of

course, is that they are not intended to provide comprehensive educational planning assistance (see Table 45).

Table 45
Sources of information about training and education

Source	Total sample (N=1274)		Persons naming one source (N=408)	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%
CEIC	442	34.7	144	35.3
Former teacher or principal	310	24.3	96	23.5
High school counsellor	234	18.4	63	15.4
Post-secondary institutions	232	18.2	70	17.2
Friends, prof. acquaintances	40	3.1	6	1.5
Dept. Culture, Rec. and Youth	37	2.9	2	0.5
Department of Education	33	2.6	7	1.7
Media (radio, TV, newspaper)	22	1.7	5	1.2
Parents	20	1.6	2	0.5
Public library	16	1.3	2	0.5
Private industry	15	1.2	3	0.7
YM/YWCA	8	0.6	3	0.7
Br. T.I. Murphy Centre	3	0.2	2	0.5
Dept. Career Development (now Educ.)	2	0.2	1	0.2
Govt.depts./Police/Army	1	0.1	0	--
Other	3	0.3	2	0.5
Don't know, not sure	418	32.8	--	--

Unlike the CEIC as an institution, however, the responses were more personalized when sources in the more familiar high school were named. A fair number, 42.7% named at least one of the school counsellor, teachers or principal as one of the sources they would consult, and 332 persons (26.1% of the total interviewed) naming more than one source named both the school counsellor and teacher or principal. Furthermore, 38.9% of those naming one source named one of these. This can be contrasted to the 7.4% who would consult the same sources for information about getting work (see Table 44, page 79). These sources carried the best likelihood of comprehensive information of all the sources named. The actual use of the school by the early leaver would depend on the availability of resources and time and the willingness of the school to help. Underlying this, the willingness of the early leaver to consult the school has to be considered. In an earlier section, it was noted that the school tended to be avoided by the leavers on the more fundamental question of school leaving itself.

Two programs with local prominence were named by a small number of interviewees as a source of information about education and training. The Brother T.I. Murphy Centre and the programs sponsored by the YMCA are designed to provide this information in a comprehensive way, and would represent an excellent resource. Only eleven persons mentioned these sources, however, perhaps because the programs are small, and depend primarily on word of mouth to attract a localized clientele to their doors.

In addition to the large number of persons who said that they did not know where to go for information, many named sources that would be able to provide only limited or restrictive information. Post secondary institutions were named by many as the only source they would consult, and while these places would surely provide information relating to their own programs, it is doubtful that the early leaver would get the more comprehensive assistance that is required. The same is true of the various government departments and the media. At the time of the survey the career information services division of the Department of Career

Development and Advanced Studies (now Department of Education) was only in a formative stage. In all, a minimum of 52% of the sample either did not know of any sources, or would have consulted sources that would be likely to provide insufficient help. This is one reason why a more comprehensive knowledge of information resources is needed by the early leaver. Considering the numbers who focused on a single resource when responding in the interview, a one-stop outlet for such information might be desirable.

High school completion

The early leavers tended to be concerned about their level of education and training even though it was not evident that the completion of a conventional high school program would be seen by them to be an appropriate way to improve their educational status. Knowledge of the ways to finish high school can be regarded to be an indicator of an interest in finishing, and many early leavers do not have that knowledge. A fair number of early leavers have no clear idea of the alternatives to returning to high school even though most (67.5%) said that they knew of ways to complete (see Table 46).

Table 46
Do you know any way to get a high school diploma besides going back to high school?
(N=1274)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	860	67.5
No	275	21.6
Don't know	117	9.2
No response	22	1.7

Most commonly, 52.1% of those saying they knew a way to upgrade said that they would go to night school or take the supplementary public examinations. The adequacy of these solutions can be questioned, but it suggests that for many, completion of public examinations is the main impediment to graduation. The reasons why the exams have not been completed cannot be explored here. However, they are likely to be numerous, varying from failure in previous exams, to fear of the examination process. A number, 145, or 18.2% of those knowing a way, said that they could do the GED exams. An additional 32.2% said that they could enter the community colleges. There is no clear picture available of the programs to which the leavers were referring, and it may be assumed that these responses were made in ignorance of the actual availability of secondary upgrading routes in these institutions (see Table 47).

Table 47
Ways to upgrade to a high school diploma with out returning to high school
(N=797)

Upgrading route	Frequency	Percent
Night school/supp. exams	415	52.1
Community college	257	32.2
Upgrading	104	13.0
GED	145	18.2
Correspondence	43	5.4
Brother T. I. Murphy Centre	14	1.8
Private tutoring college	7	0.9
Other	14	1.8
Don't know	6	1.0

Note: The number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because several respondents named more than one upgrading route.

The respondents' level of information about academic upgrading was clearly quite limited. About one third, 32.5% of all those questioned, did not know of any way to finish high school; and 7.0% of those who said that they knew of a way could not name one. Furthermore, 609, or 70.8% of those saying that they knew a way to upgrade to a high school diploma gave only one example of how to do this (see Table 48). Of this number, 16.9% did not name specifically available programs, but gave general, and non-specific categories, such as "upgrading". In all, 49.5% of those interviewed were unable to name a way to complete high school, other than by returning to the school from which they came

Table 48
Number of possible upgrading routes named by early leavers who said they knew of ways to upgrade (N=860)

Number of routes named	Frequency	Percent
1	609	70.8
2	173	20.1
3	15	1.7
Don't know	4	.5
No response	59	6.9

Note: Of 860 respondents who said they knew of a way to upgrade, only 797 could specifically name an upgrading route.

Considering that many of the early leavers expressed the opinion that high school was not meeting their needs, there was a possibility that other avenues, specifically the community colleges, were seen by them to be more relevant. Over half (53.8%) of those interviewed said that there were community college programs that they could gain admission to at the time of the interview, while 13.2% did not think that they could get admitted to any, 32.9% either did not know if there were such programs, or failed to respond to the question. A number, 122 or 17.9% of those

believing that there were community college programs for which they could qualify, named programs that were obviously not available to them because of their incomplete secondary schooling (see Table 49 and Table 50). In the case of several other programs that were mentioned, the actual current admissions standards are highest than the basic minimum standards established for the programs.

Table 49
Are there programs in community colleges you could get into now?
(N=1274)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	686	53.8
No	168	13.2
Don't know	403	31.6
No response	17	1.3

SEARCH SKILLS

Job search skills are the knowledge and skills that are possessed by people that relate to their ability to access the job market. By extension, search skills are also relevant to the ability to access educational opportunity. In the previous section, early leavers generally expressed some concern about their ability to attain job entry. An analysis of questions designed to estimate the level of their search skills tends to confirm that there is good reason to be concerned.

An interview by telephone is necessarily limited in its ability to assess in depth capabilities such as search skills. The outcomes of the analysis, therefore, indicate only the general trends about how persons would identify likely places of employment, and then present themselves during the hiring process.

Table 50
Training programs early school leavers thought they would be eligible to enter at the time of school leaving (Programs mentioned by 15 or more respondents)

Program	Number of times mentioned
Carpentry, pre-employment	151
Academic upgrading	76
Mechanics	72
Welding, pre-employment	57
Bricklaying	55
Cooking, commercial	52
Electrical, basic pre-employment	49
Beauty culture	43
Auto body repair	28
Auto mechanics	24
Heavy equipment operator	23
Barbering/hairdressing	20
Secretarial science	19
Plumbing	18
Business	16

Knowledge of Job Information Sources

During the interview the respondents were asked in an open-ended way to whom they would go to ask about getting a job. This question focused on the sources of information that would be accessed by the school leavers. The variety of sources that would be perceived by a person was examined first (see Table 51).

Table 51
Number of sources of information about gaining employment named by respondents (N=1274)

Number of sources	Freq.	%
One	585	45.9
Two	440	34.5
Three	115	9.0
Four	24	1.9
Five	2	0.2
Do not know/not sure	93	7.3
No response	15	1.2

About 8.5% did not know a source or gave no response to the question, suggesting that they knew of no approach that they could take about finding work. Another 45.9% gave only a single response, while 34.5% gave 2 responses. Only 11% gave 3 to 5 responses. In general, the sample was limited in its view of the variety of help that could be sought. Naturally, in some cases this could reflect the situation in which they found themselves. In some areas of the province, resources to aid in job search are limited. The interview situation, itself, might also have been a restraining influence on the scope of the responses of some persons. Nonetheless, it is apparent, and perhaps expected, that the repertoire of responses to this question suggested a limited perception of the resources available.

The responses given to the question about information sources were categorized into thirteen different types of sources, two of which were ambiguous. In the most common response, 50.7% said they would go directly to the potential employer to find out about a job, and 48.3% said that they would enquire at the Canada Employment Centres. Friends and relatives would be a source for 28.5%, while 21.4% would consult the

advertisements in the newspaper. Very few would ask at the school. Only a trifling number, five of those interviewed, suggested more creative approaches like placing their own ad in the newspaper (see Table 52).

Table 52
Early leavers' preferred sources of help in looking for work
(N=1166)

Source	Freq.	%
Direct with employers	591	50.7
CEIC (Manpower)	563	48.3
Friends or relations	332	28.5
Newspaper advertisements	249	21.4
Out of province	50	4.3
Go elsewhere in province	41	3.5
Social Services	23	2.0
Teachers, principals	22	1.9
"Help wanted" notices	19	1.6
Counsellors	16	1.4
Place ads in newspaper, etc.	5	0.4
Other	4	0.3
Books	1	0.1
Do not know	93	7.6
No response	15	1.2

Note: The number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because several respondents named more than one source.

Some said that they would look away from home, and perhaps out of the province. It was difficult to know what was meant by this, as the

response suggested that a change of venue would represent the strategy in getting information about work.

Those giving only one response were a special case. While they responded in roughly the same way as did the entire sample, there were some interesting differences. In general, this group seemed limited in two ways. First, they had described a very limited repertoire of resources in job search; and second, they seemed to rely heavily on personal contact in the local area. We suspect that those who said only that they would go elsewhere would also explore their personal contacts upon arrival. Only 32.6% of this group said they would go to CEIC, compared to 48.3% of those indicating more than one source. The remainder would rely on personal contact: 42.2% would go directly to employers; 13.7% would seek out friends and relatives; and 1.7% would talk to teachers, counsellors and social workers (see Table 53).

Table 53
Sources of help about getting a job
respondents naming only one source
(N = 585)

Source	Freq.	%
Employers directly	247	42.2
CEIC (Manpower)	191	32.6
Friends or relations	80	13.7
Go outside the province	22	3.8
Look at newspaper	21	3.6
Go elsewhere in the province	7	1.2
Department of Social Services	7	1.2
Place advertisement	2	0.3
Teachers, principals	2	0.3
School counsellors	1	0.2
Other	1	0.2
Don't know	4	0.7

Preparing for a Job Interview

In another open question, interviewees were asked to describe what they would do to get ready for a job interview. The responses were categorized, and as a first step, the number of categorized responses given by each respondent was tallied (see Table 54).

Table 54
What respondents would do to get ready for a job interview
Total responses for each interviewee
(N=1274)

Number of responses	Freq.	%
One	445	34.9
Two	448	35.2
Three	93	7.3
Four	8	0.6
Five	3	0.2
Don't know/not sure	224	17.6
No response	53	4.2

About 22% either did not give a response to the question, or said that they did not know what to do to get ready for an interview. An additional 34.9% gave a single response to the question. Only 35.2% gave two responses, while a few persons (only 8.1%) gave more than two responses.

Many persons, 277 or 21.7% of the total interviewed failed to respond to this question on preparing for an interview, many saying that they did not know what they would do. When the answers given by those who did respond were examined, the most common suggestion made by 694, or 69.6% of this group, was that they would select suitable clothes and be well groomed (see Table 55).

Table 55
What respondents would do to prepare for a job interview
(N=997)

Response	Number of responses	Percent
Choose suitable clothes	694	69.6
Anticipate questions and prepare answers	298	29.9
Prepare a resume	194	19.0
Read up on the job	131	13.1
Summarize qualifications	129	12.9
Arrive early	105	10.5
Prepare questions to ask	54	5.4
Find out about the company	24	2.4
Role play the interview	17	1.7
Check time and place of the interview	17	1.0

Note: The number of responses exceeds the number of respondents because several respondents named more than one preparation.

There was not as much emphasis on the content of the interview itself, that is, the presentation of information an employer could use to judge an applicant's suitability for a particular job. About one third (29.9%) said that they would anticipate questions and prepare answers, 19% said they would prepare a resume, and 12.9% said they would summarize their qualifications. It was not clear whether this would be part of resume preparation, or in anticipation of questions in the interview. Also, 35.5% said they would do one or the other of the three, that is, summarize their qualifications or try to anticipate questions in the interview or prepare a resume. Only a few would do more than one of these, and 58% mentioned none of them.

The emphasis in the sample on presenting themselves well as persons and making a good initial impression was obvious and raises questions about the perception of the primary purpose of the interview, and the nature of the information to be sought by an employer in an interview. When the jobs require little job experience, prospective employers are no doubt going to be strongly impressed by the appearance and personality of the applicants. In instances where there is competition for the jobs at stake, however, the content of the interview will be important as well, and the ability of the applicants to relate their personal attributes to the job, and to talk about other job-related issues is likely to be important when hiring decisions are being made.

Letters of Application

Respondents were asked several questions about letters of application for a job, including whether they would be able to write one, what they would put in such a letter, and where they would find help to write a letter. In a diverse labour market, where job applicants often live far from the source of the work, written communication with employers assumes considerable importance, and is often prerequisite to the interview. It was clear in an earlier question that most early leavers expected to rely on personal contact during job search. This is at variance with the realities of the broader labour market situation, though it may still be of significance in a local context.

Table 56
Do you think you could write
a proper letter of application for a job
(N=1274)

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	878	68.9
No	379	29.8
No response	17	1.3

When interviewed, 31.1% of the respondents either said that they were unable to write a proper letter of application for a job, or made no response at all when asked this question (see Table 56).

Respondents were also asked to suggest appropriate content for a letter of application. Two hundred, or 15.7% of those interviewed, gave no response, or said that they did not know, when asked what they would include. The view of an additional 16.3% was limited to only one response, while 30.1% had ideas for two things to include, and 38% gave three or more responses (see Table 57).

Table 57
Preparation for job interviews
Number of responses for each respondent
(N=1274)

Number of responses given	Frequency	Percent
No responses	200	15.7
One	208	16.3
Two	383	30.1
Three	294	23.1
Four	126	9.9
Five	63	5.0

In general, those perceiving that they lacked ability to write a proper letter made fewer suggestions concerning letter content than those who felt they had the ability. As can be seen in Table 58, 48.3% of those believing they lacked the ability made none or only one suggestion for content compared to 24.6% of those who felt they had the ability.

Over half (704, or 55.3%) of those interviewed said they would get help to write their letter of application. Few, 6.4% gave no response

Table 58
What would you put in a letter of application for a job?
The number of responses by perception of ability to write a letter
(N=1257)

	Number of responses						
Could you write a letter?	0	1	2	3	4	5	Row total
Yes							
Freq.	82	134	270	239	98	55	878
%	9.3	15.3	30.8	27.2	11.2	6.3	69.8
No							
Freq.	112	71	107	53	28	8	379
%	29.6	18.7	28.2	14.0	7.4	2.1	30.2
Column total							
Freq.	194	205	377	292	126	8	1257
%	15.4	16.3	30.0	23.2	10.0	2.1	100.0

when asked this question. Only 38.3% said that they would write the letter of application on their own. About 9% of the 704 persons who would seek help with a letter of application did not name anyone they thought could help them. Nearly everyone else said that they would consult their parents, friend or relative (76.7%). A few (11.3%) would seek help from someone at school (see Table 59 and Table 60).

Table 59
Would you get help to write the letter of application?
(N=1274)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Write letter on own	489	38.3
Get help to write	704	55.3
No response	81	6.4

Table 60
Whom would you get to help with writing a letter of application for a job?
(N=704)

Source of help	Freq.	%
Parents	239	33.9
Friend	124	17.6
Brothers/sisters	106	15.1
School personnel	72	10.2
Relative	71	10.1
Guidance counsellor	8	1.1
CEIC	7	1.0
Book	6	.9
Social worker	4	.6
Previous employer	3	.4
Don't know	44	6.2
No response	20	2.8

Note: Only one response per respondent considered in the analysis.

The most popular suggestion for the content of letters of application was information about work experience, and in fact, 50.8% of those interviewed said that they would give information about their work-related attributes, that is, that they were hard-working, in good health, and so forth. There was a tendency not to make responses about personal information of any type, even basic information such as the name, address and telephone number, although the early leavers might have assumed that this would be part of every letter. Other information of a personal nature, such as statements about reliability, promptness, and personal interests

were mentioned by fewer than 18% of all those interviewed. Educational background was mentioned by 27.0% for inclusion in a letter of application. Failure to give much emphasis to this is probably a reflection of the poor educational qualifications of the respondents (see Table 61).

Table 61
Items early leavers would include in a letter of application
(N=1274)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Work experience	647	50.8
Work-related attributes	430	33.8
References	349	27.4
Educational background	344	27.0
Personal data	225	17.7
Qualifications/training	212	16.6
Personal attributes	188	14.8
Personal interests/achievements	116	9.1
Availability for work	62	4.9
Enclosed resume	42	3.3
Salary expected	37	2.9
Extra-curricular activities	21	1.6

If only one idea for the letter of application was given, the focus was on the work-related personal attributes of the respondent, such as ability, willingness to work hard, and so forth. Forty-four point two percent of single responses were in this category, which suggested that they had made good judgements about information that was likely to impress a prospective employer (see Table 62).

Table 62
Items early school leavers would include in a letter of application
(Respondents making only one or two responses)
(N = 383)

Response	1 item	%	2 items	%
Work-related attributes	92	44.2	148	38.6
Work experience	51	24.5	209	54.6
Educational background	17	8.2	84	21.9
References	14	6.7	80	20.9
Personal attributes	12	5.8	62	16.4
Qualifications/training	11	5.3	65	17.0
Enclosed resume	5	2.4	10	2.6
Personal data	5	2.4	57	14.9
Availability for work	1	0.5	21	5.5
Personal interests/ achievements	0	0.0	16	4.2
Extra-curricular activities	0	0.0	4	1.0
Salary expected	0	0.0	10	2.6

In general, given the same preferences as those making only one response, those making two responses should have shown about twice the proportion of responses in each category. This did not happen. The actual proportion of those responding with work-related attributes was lower (38.6%). The expected proportion responded saying that they would mention their work experience (54.6%). Most other categories were responded to proportionately more than expected. For example, those who would include personal data increased from 2.4% to 14.9%. Those making only one response seemed to favour selling themselves as hard and willing workers. Those making two responses (and more) were more sensitive to the broader interests of employers who are hiring.

KNOWLEDGE OF JOB HOLDING SKILLS

While most of the earlier questions focused on job search, and the knowledge, attitudes and so forth that were associated with finding employment and training opportunities, one set of questions asked about employee characteristics that were needed to retain employment. The early leavers were asked about the kinds of things that were important to the employer when they were actually on the job. Most gave at least one response, and the majority gave more than one (see Table 63).

Table 63
Worker characteristics considered to be important to employers by early school leavers
Number of responses by early leaver
(N=1274)

Number of responses	Frequency	Percent
0	30	2.4
1	128	10.1
2	423	33.2
3	437	34.3
4	200	15.7
5	37	2.9
Don't know	19	1.5

While there were a variety of employee attributes mentioned, personal characteristics such as dress, manners, honesty and temperance (48.0%), together with reliability (44.2%) were mentioned most frequently. Job related attributes such as the quality of work (40.4%) and diligence (36.3%) were also mentioned frequently (see Table 64).

Upgrading efforts by employees were not thought by anyone to be of interest to employers, and interestingly, job skills were thought important

Table 64
When you have a job, what sorts of things are important to your employer?
Percent of total sample selecting each

	Total sample (N=1274)		Single response (N=128)	
Worker attribute	N	%	N	%
Personal characteristics	611	48.0	10	7.8
Reliability	563	44.2	7	5.5
Quality work	515	40.4	48	37.5
Diligence	462	36.3	29	22.7
Job-related relationships	406	31.9	6	4.7
Attitude toward the job	324	25.4	3	2.3
Job skills	279	21.9	25	19.5
Attention to instructions	110	8.6	0	0.0
Upgrading efforts	0	0.0	0	0.0
Don't know	19	1.5	0	0.0

by only 21.9%. In general, the persons responding to the survey would have had work experience requiring minimal entry skills and on-the-job training. This experience could predispose them to place more emphasis on their personal characteristics in the work setting. It is true that at any level of employment, the personal traits of the workers have been shown to be more important to employers than are the job skills. We suspect that skill levels are assessed at an early time in the screening process, so that the employer has reasonable assurance that these needs will be met. Employer demands at any level, therefore, are likely to be experienced as

demands to be on time, for low absenteeism, for good social skills, and so forth.

An interesting contrast is seen in those who mentioned only one attribute. They turn the order around, emphasizing quality of work, diligence and work skills, and mention the personal employee characteristics only infrequently.

SECTION FIVE

PLANS OF EARLY LEAVERS AT SCHOOL-LEAVING TIME

GENERAL PLANS AND SUPPORT

An initial interest of the survey was to learn about the immediate plans of persons as they decided to leave school. From the analysis, it appeared that most persons leaving school early did so without a clear idea of how they would live once they were on their own. They were not self-supporting. Most reported having $25.00 or less spending money each week, and most were dependent upon their parents although many did have part-time and summer employment (see Table 65 and Table 66).

The perspective taken by the early leavers when asked about their plans is quite interesting. A number, about 5.2%, said that they planned just to "hang around" for awhile. The majority, about 58%, said that they intended to look for work, however. Even at school-leaving time, over 11.5% of the early leavers reported that they were planning to apply to "trades" school or night school. A few even said that they planned to return to high school. With the exception of those who said that they had a job ready for them, and those persons getting married, or having a child, no one reported leaving school to pursue specific and defined goals.

Table 65
Weekly Spending Money
of Early Leavers
(N = 1274)

Spending Money	Frequency	Percent
None reported	18	1.3
Less that $10.00	227	17.8
$10.00 to 25.00	615	48.3
$25.00 to $50.00	256	20.1
More than $50.00	158	12.4

Table 66
Sources of spending money at time
of school leaving
(N = 1274)

Source of spending money	Frequency	Percent
Parents	1030	80.8
Odd jobs	186	14.6
Summer work	162	12.7
Part-time work	111	8.7
Social Assistance	29	2.3

The most interesting group is the 12% or so who said simply that they planned to travel or leave the province, without any other indication of what their plans might have been. There is a sense of general aimlessness in this group, of which the lack of relevance of school noted earlier is just a symptom (see Table 67).

Table 67
Plan at the time of school leaving
(N = 1274)

Plans	Frequency	Percent
Look for work	749	58.8
Take a job already lined up	161	12.6
Leave the province	154	12.1
Apply to the trades or night school	146	11.5
Hang around	66	5.2
Return to high school	54	4.2
Have a baby	41	3.2[1]
Work around the house	27	2.1
Leave home	7	0.5
Look after health	3	0.2
Get married	3	0.2
Take correspondence courses	3	0.2
Travel	2	0.2
Other	2	0.2
Don't know	109	8.6
No response	15	1.2

[1]8.5 % of females

NATURE OF WORK PLANS

In general, large numbers leaving school early did so without a clear plan to achieve full time employment even though most said that they planned to work. Only 161 persons, or 17.7% of the 910 who were planning work, said that they had a job to go into immediately. However, when

they were asked to name the general category of work that they had obtained, it became evident that very few, about 14% of the 161, actually had firm employment when they quit school (see Table 68).

Table 68
If you had a job lined up on leaving school, what was the general job category
(N = 161)

Job Category	Frequency	Percent
No response	123	76.4
Other business	18	11.2
Odd jobs	9	5.6
Family business	4	2.5
Anything	4	2.5
Own business	1	0.1
Didn't know	1	0.6
Gov't project	1	0.6

Note: Only 22, or 13.7% can be said to have had a firm job.

Over half, 746 respondents (59% of the total interviewed) said that they were planning to look for work, and 47% of these, or 351 respondents, did not respond at all to the question about the type of work they would look for, while another 6.8% said that they did not know. Another 12.7% said they would take anything they could find, while 23.3% planned to look for "odd jobs". Only 8.3% planned to look for work in an established business. There was no evidence that plans to leave school were an alternative based on a realistic plan to work (see Table 69).

An examination of the specific jobs named by those planning to look for work reveals the expected list of low-paying unskilled categories, except

Table 69
If planning to look for work after school leaving,
What type of work did you think it would be?
(N = 746)

Type of work	Frequency	Percent
Odd jobs	174	23.3
Anything	95	12.7
Other business	56	7.5
Gov't project	11	1.5
Own business	4	0.5
Family business	2	0.3
Work around home	2	0.3
Don't know	51	6.8
No response	351	47.1

Note: A total of 497, or 66%, had no idea of the kind of work they would look for.

for about 2% who named clearly unrealistic jobs, given their educational history. About 11% planned to seek employment in general labouring jobs. An examination of the list shows other jobs with similar characteristics. Another 7.8% were planning to do babysitting, and 13.6% said they would look for employment in the fishing industry. Fewer named retail sales, gas station attendant, construction and food service as their employment targets, although for most, these jobs are very likely. Other than this, people either didn't know, or named miscellaneous unskilled jobs (see Table 70).

INTENSITY AND DURATION OF PLANNED WORK

A natural question, given the nature of the Newfoundland economy, is the degree of dependency upon income support programs of one sort or another that was planned or foreseen by the early leavers. The level of

Table 70
If you planned to look for work after leaving school, what specific job did you think it would be? (N = 1274)

Job	Frequency	Percent
Fishing	102	13.6
Labouring	86	11.5
Babysitting	58	7.8
Construction	41	5.5
Retail sales clerk	37	5.0
Factory/plant (other than fishing)	33	4.4
Gas station attendant/mechanic	25	3.3
Food service	17	2.3
Carpentry	14	1.9
Woods work	13	1.7
Janitor/cleaner	10	1.3
Officer-Clerk	7	0.9
Stockperson	7	0.9
Trucking	6	0.8
Farming	5	0.7
Hotel	4	0.5
Hospital/old age home	4	0.5
Driver	3	0.4
Armed Forces	3	0.4
Painter	2	0.3
Animal care (veterinarian office)	2	0.3
Day care	2	0.3
Computers	2	0.3
Landscaping	1	0.1
Other	264	35.3

dependence on such programs is related to the amount of time that a person works, so the leavers were asked if they planned part time or seasonal work. The interviewees had a difficult time distinguishing between part-time work (less than 30 hours per week), and seasonal work, and this confounds the interpretation of that aspect of the question, but on the main question, plans to work at year-around, full-time employment, it was apparent that only 449, or 35.2% of the sample of 1274, had such plans. This was just 54.7% of those who planned to be working, and included those who said that they had a job lined up (see Table 71).

Table 71
Initial work plans Crosstabulation of part-time/full time variables with seasonal/year round variables
(N = 1274)

	No work Planned	Seasonal	Year Around	Row total
No work planned				
Freq.	404	15	2	421
%	31.7	1.2	0.2	33.0
Full-time				
Freq.	21	179	449	649
%	1.6	14.1	35.2	50.9
		(21.4)	(54.7)	(628)
				(76.5)
Part-time				
Freq.	11	119	74	204
%	0.9	9.3	5.8	16.0
		(14.5)	(9.0)	(193)
				(23.5)
Column Total				
Freq.	436	313(298)	525(523)	1274
%	34.2	24.6 (36.3)	41.2(63.7)	(821)

Note: Figures in parentheses refer to those who stated they had plans to work.

In their planning, large numbers of those interviewed anticipated less than full employment. In response to a general question at the beginning of the interview, of those planning to work, 36.3% planned seasonal work, and 63.7% planned year round work. We cannot be certain that some of those planning part-time work really meant seasonal work, and vice versa, but it is interesting that many indicating they would work seasonally, also said that their work would be part-time (about 14.5% of those planning to work).

The fact that most early leavers anticipated less than full employment does not imply that they therefore intended to rely on programs of income support, although many probably did. In this age group, many persons continue to live with their parents, and obtain support in this way. In fact, in a later question, 71% of those reporting at interview time that they were employed, also reported living with their parents (see Table 72).

Table 72
With whom do you live, if you are employed?
(N = 565)

With whom do you live?	Frequency	Percent
Parents	401	71.0
Friends	45	8.0
Other	82	14.5
No response	37	65.5

The plans of most for only partial employment likely reflected the realities of the labour market that most of the early leavers were also planning to enter. Of those planning work, most (63.0%) planned to work near home where in many instances, there have been chronically high unemployment rates. The remainder said that they had planned to work in other locations. A greater proportion of those who planned to work away from home also expected to be fully employed, 71.4%, compared

to 44.9% of those who planned to work near home. While not conclusive, it seems evident that there are essential differences in the motivations of persons who plan to stay near home, and those who plan to leave, such that full employment may be more important to the latter (see Table 73).

Table 73
Plans for full employment
Crosstabulation with planned location of employment
(N = 1274)

	No plans/No response	Work near home	Work away from home	Row total
Partial Employment				
Freq.	4	285	83	372
%	28.6	55.1	28.6	45.3
Full Employment				
Freq.	10	232	207	449
%	71.4	44.9	71.4	54.7
Column total				
Freq.	14	517	290	821
%	1.7	63.0	35.3	100.0

SECTION SIX

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF PRESENT STATUS

After a discussion of the initial plans of the early leavers, the interview turned to a determination of their status at the time of the interview. As described earlier, the time from school leaving to the interview varied considerably, so this factor must be accommodated in the following discussion. The interviewees were given several categories of activities and asked to indicate which of them, if any, applied to their situation at the time of the interview. The interviewers asked about each of the categories, in turn. A few, 83 or 6.5% of the total, did not indicate that any of the activities applied to them, after having all of the categories read to them (see Table 74).

About 40% of those responding to this question reported that they were employed at interview time. This was after having first been asked if they were unemployed. Later in the interview, when they were asked again specifically if they were employed, 565, or 45.2% of those responding, did so in the affirmative. It is difficult to account for the difference in the

Table 74
Status of early leavers at time of interview
(N = 1274)

Status	Freq.[1]	% of total (N=1274)	% of those responding to question (N=1191)	% of those who said they were unemployed[2] (N=798)
Unemployed	499	39.2	41.9	62.5
Employed	475	37.3	39.9	...
Looking for work	374	29.4	31.4	46.9
Returnig to School	224	17.6	18.8	28.1
Pregnant	18	3.0[3]	3.2[4]	4.8[5]
Sick	22	1.7	1.9	2.8
Other	72	5.6	6.0	9.0
No response	83	6.5	...	...

[1]More than one response permitted.
[2]Determined by a second, direct question.
[3]7.9% of the total number of females in the sample (482)
[4]8.5% of the females responding to the question (446)
[5]13.1% of the unemployed females (290)

two responses except that the procedure was somewhat unreliable. The higher figure (44.3%) seems the more likely, as all persons who responded affirmatively on the second occasion were also able to name the job at which they were employed (see Table 75).

Table 75
Are you working at the present time?
(N = 1274)

Working at present	Frequency	Percent
Yes	565	44.3
No	685	53.8
No response	24	1.9

When first asked about their employment status, close to 40% of the sample reported that they were unemployed, even though only about 40% followed-up by reporting that they were employed. The remaining 20% reported themselves to be in other categories, for example, "looking for work". Apparently these persons viewed a "looking for work" situation as being different, somehow, from being "unemployed and looking for work". This category probably also includes homemakers, and persons in transition between jobs and the like. There will be further discussion of this category in a later section of the report. At this stage of the interview, only 22 persons reported themselves to be both looking for work, and employed. Of the unemployed, 46.9% said that they were looking for work. This was 29.4% of the total sample of 1274 students.

Another 17.6% of the sample said that they were returning to school. Like the "looking for work" response, this seemed to be an expression of intent as 82, or 17.3% of those saying they were returning to school also reported that they were employed, while only 7.5% reported that they were unemployed.

Seven point nine percent of females reported they were pregnant at the time of the interview. Very few (22) respondents said they were sick.

The question of employment status was explored more thoroughly at a later time in the interview. The majority, 969, or 76.1% (78.9% of those responded to the question) reported having worked at some time since leaving school (see Table 76).

Table 76
Have you worked since leaving school?
(N = 1274)

Worked since leaving school	Frequency	Percent
Yes	969	76.1
No	259	20.3
No response	46	3.6

As can be seen in Table 77, 503, or 39.5% (41.3% of those responding to the question), reported that they were looking for work at interview time. Conversely, 56% said they were not looking for work at interview time.

Table 77
Are you looking for work at present?
(N = 1274)

Presently looking for work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	503	39.5
No	714	56.0
No response	57	4.5

It is interesting that 9.3% of those with jobs said they were looking for a new job, yet 285 persons, 23.5% of those who were unemployed, said they were not looking for work (see Table 78). Some of these, 104, or

Table 78
Crosstabulation of "looking for work" with "presently working"
(N = 1214)

	Looking for work		
Presently Working	Yes	No	Row Total
Yes			
Freq.	113	428	541
%	9.3	35.3	44.6
No			
Freq.	388	285	673
%	32.0	23.5	55.4
Column Total			
Freq.	501	713	1214
%	41.3	58.7	100.0

Note: "No response" omitted from analysis

15.5% of those not working at the time of the interview, had not worked since leaving school an average of 33 weeks previously.

EMPLOYMENT AT INTERVIEW TIME.

A fair number, 565, or 45.2% of the sample responding to the question named a job that they were working in at the time of the interview (see Table 75, page 112). In general, those longest out of school also reported the highest level of employment, with only 28.8% of the most recent graduates being employed, compared to more than 50% of those out of school more than 50 weeks (see Table 79).

There was a dip in the level of employment reported by those out of school for 60-70 weeks with only 40% reporting being employed, in contrast to the almost 50% employed between 50 and 60 weeks after school leaving and 53% employed between 70 and 80 weeks after leaving. In interpreting this, it is clear that the statistics for those out of school more than one year will be less reliable as fewer persons reported being out of school that long.

Of the 565 who named a job they held at interview time, 53.5% said that it was full-time work, 17.3% reported seasonal work and 29.2% reported that it was part time work. There was some evidence that subjects were unclear about the distinction between part-time work and seasonal work. Subjects were therefore also asked the number of hours worked per week at their present job. As a result, 20.9% reported fewer than 30 hours per week and would thus ordinarily be classified as part-time. Most who were working reported full-time work, with the median number of hours per week reported being 40 (see Table 80 and Table 81).

At interview time, if working, there was a significant difference in the numbers of those in Newfoundland and those on the mainland (not Labrador) who were working full-time.

Table 79
Employment status at interview time
by time elapsed since leaving school
(N = 1274)

	Number of weeks since school leaving										
Employed	0-10	>10-20	>20-30	>30-40	>40-50	>50-60	>60-70	>70-80	>80-90	>90-95	Row Total
Yes											
Freq.	15	41	55	61	178	115	21	60	16	3	565
%	28.8	38.7	39.9	44.9	43.6	49.8	39.6	52.6	57.1	37.5	44.3
No											
Freq.	35	64	82	71	221	111	30	54	12	5	685
%	67.3	60.4	59.4	52.2	54.2	48.1	56.6	47.4	42.9	62.5	53.8
Column Total											
Freq.	52	106	138	136	408	231	53	114	28	8	1274
%	4.1	8.3	10.8	10.7	32.07	18.1	4.2	8.9	2.2	0.6	100.0

Table 80
Type of work, if employed at interview time
(N = 565)

Type of work	Frequency	Percent
Part-Time	165	29.2
Full-Time	302	53.5
Seasonal	98	17.3

Table 81
Number of hours worked in present job
(N = 565)

Number of hours	Frequency	Percent
No hours reported	16	2.8
Less than 12 hours per week	47	8.3
12 to 29 hours per week	71	12.6
30 to 48 hours per week	363	64.3
more than 48 hours per week	68	12.0

Most, 90% of those working on the mainland were full-time compared to 47.5% working in Newfoundland. Also, 82.5% (42) of those who had returned from the mainland were unemployed (see Table 82).

The typical and expected types of jobs were reported by those who said they were employed. Sales and services accounted for 34.3% of the jobs held by the respondents. Another, 21.9% were in fishing and processing and 9.9% were in construction (see Table 83).

Table 82
Residence status at interview time
Crosstabulated with employment status
(N = 1274)

Residence Status		Employment status: Yes	No	No response	Row Total
Left province, returned home	Freq	10	47	0	57
	%	17.5	82.5	0	4.5
Left home community, stayed in NF, returned to home community	Freq	12	19	0	31
	%	38.7	61.3	0	2.4
No initial contact, later at home	Freq	28	27	0	55
	%	50.9	49.1	0	4.3
Left province, no contact		31	26	0	57
	Freq	54.4	45.6	0	4.5
	%				
Left province, still away		69	8	0	77
	Freq	89.6	10.4	0	6.0
	%				
Left home community, stayed in NF		1	4	0	5
	Freq	20.0	80.0	0	0.4
	%				
At home	Freq	414	554	24	992
	%	41.7	55.8	2.4	77.9
Column total	Freq	24	565	685	1274
	%	1.9	55.8	53.8	100.0

Table 83
Major occupational category of job at interview time
(N = 565)

Category	Frequency	Percent
Service	113	20.0
Sales	81	14.3
Processing	81	14.3
Construction trades	56	9.9
Fishing, trapping	43	7.6
Fabricating	35	6.2
Clerical and related	22	3.9
Employment project	18	3.2
Material handling	17	3.0
Transport equipment operating	12	2.1
Manpower training	9	1.6
Forestry, logging	9	1.6
Farming, etc	6	1.1
Machining	6	1.1
Religion	3	0.5
Arts	2	3.9
Mining	2	0.4
Health	1	0.2
Sports and recreation	1	0.2
Processing (mineral)	1	0.2
Social sciences	1	0.2
Other	45	8.0

JOB SEARCH ACTIVITY AT INTERVIEW TIME

Forty-one point three percent of those interviewed reported that they were currently looking for work (see Table 78, page 114). Of the 501 persons in this category, 22.6% of these reported being employed at the time.

A total of 57.6% of the 673 unemployment respondents said that they were looking for work. When the time since school leaving is considered, it appears that over the two year period reported, about 40-60% of the unemployed say they are engaged in a job hunt. This peaks to about 69% at two times, 10-20 weeks after school leaving, and 50-60 weeks after school leaving (see Table 84). At any given time, a fair number, about 23.5% of those interviewed, were unemployed but not actively engaged in job search.

One hundred and sixteen of the 388 unemployed searchers (29.9%) reported applying for five or more than five jobs, while 21.9% of the searchers reported not applying for any jobs. The reasons for this lack of application is not known, however 40% of these had decided to leave school within 10 weeks of the date of the interview (see Table 85).

As might be expected, those out of school the longest reported having applied for the most jobs. The trend is not linear, however. The number of jobs applied for seems to peak in this group with an average of 3.4% 30-40 weeks after school-leaving. It seems to drop briefly, and then stabilize at about an average of 3 jobs applied for since school leaving for those out of school the longest, 50 or more weeks.

This group was unemployed at the time the question was asked, but in interpreting this, the past employment history of the group should be considered, as 232 of the 388 reported having been previously employed. A second consideration, however, is the general impression that this gives of the actual intensity of search among this group. Overall, at the time of the survey, employed persons reported applying for an average of 0.74 jobs. Unemployed persons reported applying for 1.73 jobs. In neither

Table 84
Unemployed and looking for work
Breakdown by time elapsed since school-leaving
(N = 684)

Looking for work	Time since school leaving (weeks)										Row total
	>0-10	>10-20	>20-30	>30-40	>40-50	>50-60	>60-70	>70-80	>80-90	>90-95	
Yes											
Freq.	20	44	43	40	116	77	15	25	6	2	388
%	57.1	68.8	52.4	56.3	52.7	69.4	50.0	46.3	50.0	40.0	56.7
No											
Freq.	15	20	36	29	99	33	15	29	6	3	285
%	42.9	31.3	43.9	40.8	45.0	29.7	50.0	53.7	50.0	60.0	41.7
No resp.											
Freq.	0	0	3	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	11
%	0.0	0.0	3.7	2.8	2.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.67
Column Total											
Freq.	35	64	82	71	220	11	30	54	12	5	684
%	5.1	9.4	12.0	10.4	32.2	16.2	4.4	7.9	1.8	0.7	100.0

Table 85
Number of jobs applied for
Breakdown by time since school leaving
(N = 388)

Number of weeks		Number of jobs 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Row Total
0-10	Freq	8	5	3	0	0	0	4	20
	%	40.0	25.0	15.0	0	0	0	20.0	5.2
>10-20	Freq	12	9	6	5	2	2	8	44
	%	27.3	20.5	13.6	11.4	4.7	4.5	18.2	11.3
>20-30	Freq	7	10	6	4	2	4	10	43
	%	16.3	23.3	14.0	9.3	4.7	9.3	23.3	11.1
>30-40	Freq	6	6	4	3	5	3	13	40
	%	15.0	15.0	10.0	7.5	12.5	7.5	32.5	10.3
>40-50	Freq	29	14	18	15	13	7	20	116
	%	25.0	12.1	15.5	12.9	11.2	6.0	17.2	29.2
>50-60	Freq	15	7	15	6	3	8	23	77
	%	19.5	9.1	19.5	7.8	3.9	10.4	29.3	19.8
>60-70	Freq	3	1	3	3	2	0	3	15
	%	20.0	6.7	20.0	20.0	13.3	0.0	20.0	3.9
>70-80	Freq	4	4	2	2	5	2	6	25
	%	16.0	16.0	8.0	8.0	20.0	8.0	24.0	6.4
>80-90	Freq	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	6
	%	0.0	16.7	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	1.5
>90-95	Freq	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	%	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.5
Column total	Freq	85	57	58	40	32	26	90	388
	%	21.9	14.7	14.9	10.3	8.2	6.7	23.2	100.0

case is there evidence of high levels of job search activity, suggesting that a number of factors need to be explored further, including the perception of the job market, the location of the job seekers, and the accepted conventions that are followed in job search (see Table 86).

Table 86
Average number of jobs applied for by those unemployed but looking for work at interview time Breakdown by time elapsed (N = 388)

Weeks since school leaving	Sample size	Number of jobs applied for
0-10	20	1.8
>10-20	44	2.3
>20-30	43	2.8
>30-40	40	3.4
>40-50	116	2.6
>50-60	77	3.2
>60-70	15	2.8
>70-80	25	3.2
>80-90	6	3.5
>90-95	2	3.0

Only 29.1% of the group looking for work reported daily job search activity. In addition, only 12.6% reported more than 10 hours of job search activity each week. Most, 58.5% of the searchers, reported 3 hours or less. Closer analysis is required to understand this further, but the immediate explanation of this would be that the searchers felt that they had exhausted reasonable search opportunities in their areas (see Table 87 and Table 88).

Two hundred and eighty five respondents were unemployed but not looking for work. Of these, 16.1% said they were waiting to go back to school. Another 13% stated that they did not want a job while another 6.7% said that they had a definite job starting soon. All the rest stated that they had been laid off, or were seasonally out of work, that there was no work available, or else they gave no reason at all (see Table 89).

Table 87
If looking for work, is there daily search activity?
Breakdown by employment status
(N = 503)

Employed	Is there daily job search activity? Yes	No	No response	Row total
Yes				
Freq.	26	59	28	113
%	23.0	52.2	24.8	22.5
No				
Freq.	103	241	44	388
%	26.5	62.1	11.3	77.1
No response				
Freq.	1	1	0	2
%	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.4
Column Total				
Freq.	130	301	72	503
%	25.8	59.8	14.3	100.0

Table 88
Time spent looking for work, if looking for work
(N = 503)

Time spent per week	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	119	23.7
1-3 hours	108	21.5
3-5 hours	85	16.9
5-10 hours	78	15.5
More than 10 hours	49	9.7
No response	64	12.7

Table 89
If not working, and not looking for work, why not?
(N = 285)

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Going back to school	46	16.1
Seasonally unemployed	43	15.1
Don't want a job now	37	13.0
No jobs available	28	9.8
Laid off	20	7.0
Definite job starting soon	19	6.7
Health	9	3.2
Disability	1	0.4
Other	47	16.5
No response	35	12.3

PLANS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

In general, education plans were unrelated to employment status. There was no significant difference between employed and unemployed school leavers, and their plans to continue their education at the time of the interview. At the time of the interview 17.2 to 17.8% of each category intended to return to school (see Table 90).

However, the intent to return to school was significantly related to the time since leaving school. As might be expected, fewest of those who had only recently decided to leave school had intentions of returning, at least at that time. The percentage who said that they had immediate intentions

Table 90
Plans to return to school at interview time
Breakdown by employment status
(N = 1274)

Employment status	No Education Plans	Education Plans	Row Total
Employed			
Freq.	394	82	476
%	82.8	17.2	37.4
Unemployed			
Freq.	656	142	798
%	82.2	17.8	62.6
Column Total			
Freq.	1050	224	1274
%	82.4	17.6	100.0

to return became larger as the time from school leaving increased from about 5% of those out of school less than ten weeks to over 25% for those out of school more than 60 weeks (see Table 91). Sixty-six, or a total of 29.5% of those planning to return, planned to return to school the September following the interview.

At interview time, 50.5% of those planning to return to school said that they had submitted an application. This did not appear to be related to the time since school leaving (see Table 92).

Those who said they applied, reported applications to 33 different institutions, with 2.2% of the applications being sent out of the province. An additional 15% planned to return to high school. Over half, 52.2% reported applications to attend community college which may have included those who planned to pursue upgrading programs there. Fourteen point two percent said they had applied to Cabot Institute (see Table 93). Only 1 person said that the Marine Institute was their choice.

Table 91
Time since school leaving compared to plans to return to school
(N = 1274)

Weeks since school leaving		Planning to return to school: Yes	Planning to return to school: No	Row Total
0-10	Freq.	3	49	52
	%	5.8	94.2	4.1
>10-20	Freq.	17	89	106
	%	16.0	84.0	8.3
>20-30	Freq.	16	122	138
	%	11.6	88.4	10.8
>30-40	Freq.	26	110	136
	%	19.1	80.9	10.7
>40-50	Freq.	72	336	408
	%	17.6	82.4	32.0
>50-60	Freq.	33	198	231
	%	14.3	85.7	18.1
>60-70	Freq.	14	39	53
	%	26.4	73.6	4.2
>70-80	Freq.	31	83	114
	%	27.2	72.8	8.9
>80-90	Freq.	9	19	28
	%	32.1	67.9	2.2
>90-95	Freq.	3	5	8
	%	37.5	62.5	0.6
Column Total				
	Freq.	224	1050	1274
	%	17.6	82.4	100.0

Table 92
If returning to school at interview time have you applied
(N = 224)

Applied	Frequency	Percent
Yes	113	50.5
No	104	46.4
No response	7	3.1

Table 93
Institutions applied to at interview time
(N = 113)

Institutions	Frequency	Percent
Returning to high school	17	15.0
General trade school/vocational schools	15	13.3
Cabot Institute of Applied Arts and Technology	16	14.2
Eastern Community College	17	15.0
Avalon Community College	11	9.7
Central Community College	7	6.2
Brother T.I. Murphy Centre	3	2.7
Western Community College	9	8.0
Fisher Institute	4	3.5
Private Colleges	4	3.5
Other	6	5.3

SECTION SEVEN

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

TIME FROM SCHOOL LEAVING TO THE INTERVIEW

The original design of the study intended that the interview take place at school-leaving time, or soon thereafter. Several factors intervened to prevent this. First, because of delays in project implementation, the interviews of the identified early leavers had to be delayed. Second, the differences between school reports of early leaving, and student reports of the time of school leaving, discussed earlier, meant that in a few cases, students would have been out of school for considerable lengths of time despite the best intentions to interview immediately. However, the delay in time between school leaving and the interview gave an opportunity to construct an early, albeit incomplete, picture of the initial employment history of the early school leaver.

The time of school leaving reported by the subject was used, rather than that reported by the school. The differences between the student reports and the school reports is generally small in most cases, and has been discussed elsewhere. The median time from leaving to interview was reported to be 45 weeks. Thus the typical school leaver reported being

out of school almost a year or more. The distribution has a few persons who reported being out of school for an extended period of over one and one half to two years, probably due to the delay in the planned interview time (see Table 94).

Table 94
Time from school leaving to the interview
(N = 1274)

Weeks elapsed	Frequency	Percent
5	52	4.1
15	106	8.3
25	138	10.8
35	136	10.7
45	408	32.0
55	231	18.1
65	53	4.2
75	114	8.9
85	28	2.2
95	8	0.6

A bias was almost surely introduced into the time-after-school-leaving factor as all persons who were reported out of the province were interviewed last, so on balance they were most likely to be out of school the longest. Those in-province at interview time reported being out of school for an average of 38.8 weeks, and a median time of 43.7 weeks. In contrast, those out of province at interview time were out of school an average of 63.1 weeks, or a median of 71.4 weeks (see Table 95).

Any analysis of time factors should therefore bear in mind that for times longer than one year, persons out-of-province are probably over-represented, and that information in this time range is less likely to

Table 95
Time from school-leaving to interview, contrasted by location at interview time (N = 1274)

	Number of weeks	
Location	Average	Median
At home	38.8	43.7
Away	63.1	71.4

be representative of the provincial picture as a whole. Another problem in interpreting these data is that trends over time are likely to be influenced by two other factors in addition to the time from school-leaving. First, much employment is seasonal, and second, about half of school leaving takes place in the summer, coincidentally with the availability of seasonal employment. The trends for summer leavers, coming into an expanding job market could be considerably different than the trends for the winter leaver, who experiences a contracting job situation.

An interesting question would be to determine just when people decide to leave the province. There was a median difference of about 28 weeks longer in the elapsed time from school leaving to interview for the group that was interviewed out of the province. The interviewing schedule of the study accounts for at most about half of this time. Persons who have left the province had been out of school longer, therefore. The additional time may represent a latent period during which the decision to leave the province was made.

THE NUMBER OF JOBS HELD SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

As the interview progressed, the early leavers were asked about the jobs that they had held since school leaving. The number of jobs held was

then determined by a simple count of all the jobs that were described. Three hundred and one persons, or 23.6%, reported that they had not been employed at all since leaving school, 39.0% had held one job, while the remainder had held from two to four jobs. Most of the leavers had some employment (see Table 96).

Table 96
Number of jobs held since leaving school
(N = 1274)

Number of jobs	Frequency	Percent
0	301	23.6
1	497	39.0
2	327	25.7
3	113	8.9
4	36	2.8

Mean = 1.3
Note: Not controlled for length of time since leaving school.

Relationship to Time Since School Leaving

The data were somewhat difficult to interpret because some people reported having had multiple jobs even though they were just out of school. They could have been working more than one job at the same time, or have had a number of short-term jobs. There was not a direct relationship between the number of jobs worked and the length of time since school leaving, even though this was generally the case (see Table 97).

The analysis suggested that as time went on, everybody eventually worked at least one job. The percentage reporting no jobs dropped steadily over time, although 23% of those out of school for a year still had not worked.

Table 97
Number of jobs since school-leaving
Breakdown by time out of school
(N = 1274)

Weeks since school leaving	0	1	2	3	4	Row total
>0-10	28	18	4	2	0	52
	53.8	34.6	7.7	3.8	0.0	4.1
>10-20	48	42	11	4	1	106
	45.3	39.6	10.4	3.8	0.9	8.3
>20-30	48	58	24	8	0	138
	34.8	42.0	17.4	5.8	0.0	10.8
>30-40	31	51	35	14	5	136
	22.8	37.5	25.7	10.3	3.7	10.72
>40-50	97	158	109	35	9	408
	23.8	38.7	26.7	8.6	2.2	32.0
>50-60	41	91	68	16	15	231
	17.7	39.4	29.4	6.9	6.5	18.1
>60-70	5	21	15	11	1	53
	9.4	39.6	28.3	20.8	1.9	4.2
>70-80	3	45	44	17	5	114
	2.6	39.5	38.6	14.9	4.4	8.9
>80-90	0	9	14	5	0	28
	0	32.1	50.0	17.9	0	2.2
>90	0	4	3	1	0	8
	0	50.0	37.5	12.5	0	0.6
Column total	301	497	327	114	36	1274
	23.6	39.0	25.7	8.9	2.8	100.0

The proportion of those in their first job at interview time was relatively stable between 32-42% regardless of the length of time since school leaving. The proportion in their second job began to increase at the 20th

week and level off at 25-29% at the 40th week, until the 70th week, when it sharply increased to 38%, and possibly higher. The proportion in their third job was low (4-10%) until the 60th week, when it increased and levelled in the range of 15-20%.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WEEKS WORKED SINCE SCHOOL LEAVING

The respondents were asked to give the number of weeks that they had worked at each of the jobs they reported having held. The total number of weeks worked was calculated and varied from no time worked to over 100 weeks. Since the higher figure is unlikely, given the time from school leaving to the interview, there was probably some inflation in the reports, at least in the extreme cases. When the typical report is considered, a reasonable and consistent picture emerges (see Table 98).

In the analysis at this stage, a distinction was not made between full time and part-time work. The average weeks worked in total since school leaving, by those who had worked, was 26.5 weeks. The median was 22 weeks worked in total, suggesting that a few people had reported an extended amount of work, but that half had worked less than the 22 weeks.

The Relative Intensity of Work After School Leaving

As expected, the longer the time reported out of school, the more weeks persons reported having worked. A breakdown of weeks worked since school leaving, by weeks elapsed since leaving school, shows the expected increase in time worked. However, the two factors, time out of school, and number of weeks worked, correlated at .37--indicating that the relationship, while significant, by no means accounted for all of the variation in weeks worked that was observed in the sample (see Table 99).

Outliers above the maximum possible weeks in each category that were worked show some inflation of the estimates, but the median values should

Table 98
Number of weeks worked since school leaving
(N = 1274)

Weeks worked	Frequency	Percent of the total sample[1] (N = 1274)	Percent of those who worked[2] (N = 923)
5	217	17.0	23.5
15	227	17.8	24.6
25	153	12.1	16.6
35	123	9.7	13.3
45	51	4.0	5.5
55	113	8.9	12.2
65	17	1.3	1.8
75	13	1.0	1.4
85	2	0.2	0.2
95	3	0.2	0.3

[1]Mean = 19.2 Standard Deviation = 20.2 Median = 13
[2]Mean = 26.5 Standard Deviation = 19.3 Median = 22

Note: Not controlled for the length of time since school leaving

give a reasonable indication of the actual weeks worked by the typical school-leaver over a period up to about one year after leaving. The medians show a pattern of work duration that begins to rise about one-half year after school leaving, plateaus at 15 to 19 weeks worked until the end of the first year, when it begins to rise again, with a second plateau possible at about 30-35 weeks total work towards the end of the second year.

The ratio of total weeks worked to the time since school leaving was calculated for each of the respondents. The average of .46 was obviously inflated by the unlikely outliers in the data. The median of .33 was

probably more realistic, suggesting that the typical school-leaver had been employed full or part-time about one-third of the time since school-leaving. This does not take into account the fact that there was an apparent latent period immediately after school leaving when unemployment was very high (see Table 100).

Table 99
Weeks worked since school leaving
by weeks elapsed since school leaving
(N = 1274)

Weeks since school leaving	Frequency	Average	Median
0-10	52	5.0	0.0
>10-20	106	8.2	0.5
>20-30	138	11.5	5.0
>30-40	136	18.0	15.0
>40-50	408	18.1	15.0
>50-60	231	22.4	19.0
>60-70	53	26.2	24.0
>70-80	114	36.3	32.0
>80-90	28	36.1	35.0
>90	8	19.9	23.5

Table 100
Ratio of total weeks worked to weeks
since school leaving
(N = 1274)

Sample size	1274
Average	0.46
Median	0.33

The median employment ratios in the several categories of time since school-leaving show a sharp increase beginning about the 20th week, peaking during the 30-40th week and dropping back until about the 70th week when it peaks again, though not as high as the initial peak. In general, the median employment ratio varies between .32 and .42, once the initial phase is complete. This suggests that in the short-term, after an initial transition from school, early leavers will be in part or full-time employment about 40% of the time (see Table 101).

Table 101
Ratio of total time worked to time since school leaving by categories of time since school leaving (N = 1274)

Weeks since school leaving	Frequency	Average	Median
0-10	52	0.72	0.0
>10-20	106	0.58	0.05
>20-30	138	0.46	0.20
>30-40	136	0.52	0.47
>40-50	408	0.40	0.32
>50-60	231	0.42	0.35
>60-70	53	0.41	0.37
>70-80	114	0.48	0.42
>80-90	28	0.43	0.42
>90	8	0.21	0.24

THE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED EACH WEEK

An estimate of the amount of part-time work was made by computing the hours that the respondents reported working each week that they worked. Again, there is probably some inflation in these figures due to over-reporting by the school leavers. About 4.2% reported working an excess of 60 hours per week. It is difficult to assess the accuracy of such reports, although intense work weeks such as these are possible, especially in seasonal jobs (see Table 102).

Table 102
Average hours worked each week, when working
(N = 881)

Average hours	Frequency	Percent
2.5	11	1.2
7.5	20	2.3
12.5	19	2.2
17.5	33	3.7
22.5	50	5.7
27.5	70	8.0
32.5	67	7.6
37.5	355	40.3
42.5	97	11.0
47.5	60	6.8
52.5	24	2.7
57.5	38	4.3
62.5	8	0.9

Mean = 38.3
Standard Deviation = 13.0
Median = 40

The median number of hours worked, by those working, was 40. About 23% of those who worked, worked less than 30 hours per week. Generally, when working, the school leavers worked full-time. Only 5.7% of those reporting work reported working less than 15 hours per week.

The average length of each completed job was reported to be 13.7 weeks. The median length, perhaps a better measure of the typical job held by most of the early leavers, was 10.5 weeks (see Table 103).

Table 103
Length of each completed job, in weeks
(N = 619)

Completed weeks	Frequency	Percent
2	109	17.6
6	133	21.5
10	128	20.7
14	71	11.5
18	55	8.9
22	41	6.6
26	31	5.0
30	19	3.1
34	8	1.3
38	6	1.0
42	2	0.3
46	0	0.0
50	16	2.6

Mean = 13.7
Median = 10.5
Standard Deviation = 10.7

SECTION EIGHT

TWO TO THREE YEAR OUTLOOK

The respondents were asked to think of the future and what their lives would be like in two to three years time. While there was some uncertainty on the part of 12.2% of the respondents, most of the total expected either to be working (66.8%), or to be in school (18.9%) (see Table 104).

Table 104
In two or three years time, what will you be doing?
(N = 1267)

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Working	846	66.8
School	239	18.9
Travelling	8	0.6
Other	20	1.6
Don't know	154	12.2

The most uncertainty was expressed about the place of residence in two to three years. A large number, 38.0% of those interviewed, said they expected to be living near their present home. A fair number, however, expected to have moved by then, 8.8% to another place in Newfoundland, while 26.7% expected to move to the mainland. Another 24% said that they did not know where they would be (see Table 105).

Table 105
In 2-3 years time, where will you be living?
(N = 1267)

Residence	Frequency	Percent
Near present home	482	38.0
Elsewhere in Nfld.	112	8.8
Labrador	20	1.6
Mainland	338	26.7
Don't know	304	24.0
Don't care	11	0.9

SHORT TERM EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS

A large number of respondents, 18.2%, could not say whether they would be working in two to three years time. This could be a result of feeling generally uncertain about the availability of employment for persons in their situation, or it could be that these early school leavers had not directed their attention in a specific way to the need to find work.

Each respondent who did answer the question was also asked to name the job they expected to be holding. The largest portion, 21.7% of the 846 respondents who believed they would be working, named jobs in the general categories of clerical, sales and services. Only 6.3% said they would be working in the fishery, and another 8.0%, named processing jobs, most likely related to the fishery. A further 1.2% listed forestry,

and 1.4% named jobs related to mining and oil. Product fabricating jobs were given by 9.2% and 13.5% said they would be in construction trades (see Table 106).

Table 106
If Working is expected, what major occupational category will you be working in?

	2 to 3 year outlook (N = 846)		5 to 10 year outlook (N = 1009)	
Major Category	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Construction trades	114	13.5	142	14.1
Service	97	11.5	128	12.7
Product fabricating	78	9.2	113	11.2
Processing	68	8.0	41	4.1
Fishing, trapping	53	6.3	49	4.9
Sales	43	5.1	32	3.2
Clerical	43	5.1	62	6.1
Transportation Equipment	24	2.8	28	2.8
Machining	13	1.5	16	1.6
Mining (and oil related)	12	1.4	6	0.6
Materials Handling	11	1.3	8	0.8
Forestry	10	1.2	7	0.7
Teaching	6	0.7	14	1.4
Medicine and health	5	0.6	23	2.3
Sports and recreation	3	0.3	3	0.3
Arts	3	0.4	13	1.3
Farming	2	0.2	2	0.2
Social Sciences	3	0.4	7	0.7
Crafts	2	0.2	7	0.7
Religion	---	---	1	0.1
Other	82	9.7	37	3.7
Manpower projects	20	2.4	48	4.8
Don't know	154	18.2	222	22.0

The jobs that were named by the persons interviewed were classified according to the general education development (GED) which was required to be successful at the jobs. The coding, performed by project staff, was based on the classifications contained in the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations (CCDO), and range from a GED classification of one to six. A number (9.2%) of the early leavers who anticipated being at work in two or three years thought they would be working at jobs primarily requiring application of common sense, a GED classification of one. Many more (40.2%) believed that they would be in jobs requiring basic literacy and numeracy, a GED level of two. A fair number (9.8%) thought that they would be doing work requiring the ability to do logical and scientific thinking, and to interpret technical instructions, GED levels five and six. As is noted in a later section, the classification system may be responsible for the more unrealistic responses (see Table 107).

Each of the jobs named was also classified according to its Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) training level. Again, this is given for each job classified in the CCDO. The SVP is an estimate of the time required in specific preparation for a job. It can be any one or a combination of types of training, including training on-the-job, and education at a university. Completion of high school is not a necessary aspect of the SVP, although it becomes more so as the level of formal training increases. Based on SVP then, 45.2% of those anticipating working in two to three years time said they would be in jobs requiring 3 months training or less. Another 11.6% named jobs needing 3-6 months training. Another 20.1% of those expecting to be working expected to be in jobs requiring longer periods of training, from six months to two years. A few (3.1%) anticipated being in jobs requiring 2 to 4 or more years training. In general, this finding suggests that many of the early leavers interviewed were expressing interest in work that would normally require high school graduation in addition to significant post-secondary education. As was seen in the earlier section describing the educational search patterns up to the time of the interview, very little had been done to initiate training programs in support of the work expectations expressed (see Table 108).

Table 107
GED levels of jobs expected in 2-3 years

GED Level	Frequency	Percent of total (N=1274)	Percent of those expecting to work (N=846)
Not anticipating employment	409	32.1	---
1	78	6.1	9.2
2	340	26.7	40.2
3	149	11.7	17.6
4	53	4.2	6.3
5	82	6.4	9.7
6	1	0.8	0.1
Did not name a job	162	12.7	19.1

1: Application of common sense.
2: Basic literacy and numeracy required, simple concrete problem-solving.
3: Deal with more involved written instruction; more complex, concrete problem-solving.
4: Interpret a variety of instructions, apply principles of rational systems in problem-solving.
5: Apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems and draw conclusions. Deal with abstract and concrete variables to solve practical problems.
6: Apply principles of logical and scientific thinking to solve a wide range of abstract, intellectual and practical problems.

SHORT TERM TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

A total of 57 different programs were being considered by the 239 persons who said that they would seek further schooling in 2-3 years time. This was 18.8% of the total interviewed. By far the largest number of these, 35.6%, said that they would seek high school upgrading. This was 6.7% of the total sample of 1274 respondents. Although this represented only a small portion of the total interviewed, there did appear to be some

Table 108
SVP levels of jobs expected in 2-3 years
(N = 846)

Length of job training required	Frequency	Percent of those expecting to work
Short demonstration	15	1.8
≤30 days	231	27.3
>30 days to 3 mos.	136	16.1
>3 mos. to 6 mos.	98	11.6
>6 mos. to 1 year	37	4.4
>1 year to 2 years	133	15.7
>2 years to 4 years	22	2.6
>4 years 8.5 years	4	0.5
No response	2	0.2

awareness of the need for a high school education. There was no indication that time since school leaving was associated with an intent to pursue high school upgrading. However, persons who had only junior high school at the time of school leaving seemed somewhat more inclined to plan academic upgrading in the near future (see Table 109 and Table 110).

Most of those planning to return to school had a specific program in mind. Only 4.6% of those expecting to be back at school did not name a course they intended to pursue. The usual type of courses were being considered, in particular, beauty culture, cosmetology, auto mechanics, autobody repair, mechanics, diesel mechanics, and the building trades. While many of these programs have not in the past specifically required high school graduation, graduation is more and more becoming prerequisite to admission if for no other reason than that high school graduates are also competing for admission. A fair number of people

Table 109
If school is planned in two to three years what program is planned?
(N = 239)

Program	Frequency	Percent
Academic - Upgrading	85	35.6
Carpentry- pre-employed	12	5.0
Beauty culture	10	4.2
Electronics	7	2.9
Mechanics	7	2.9
Heavy Equipment operator	5	2.1
Nursing Assistant	5	2.1
Engineering - general	5	2.1
Other	79	33.1
Don't know/no plans/applied unspecified program	11	4.6
No response	13	5.4

mentioned programs such as nursing, or nursing assistant, stenography, and accounting, which would explicitly require the completion of high school.

The Consistency of Expectations

There was a clear inconsistency in the responses to the questions about employment and training expectations and the fact that the respondents had not yet even attained high school graduation. There seemed to be some perception among the early leavers of the general drift of the job market in the direction of the service industries, as they tended to be naming jobs in these industries when talking about their two to three year expectations.

Table 110
Intent to do high school upgrading in two to three years contrasted to level of school at school leaving (N = 234)

Level of school		No	Yes	Row total
Sp Educ	Freq.	13	11	24
	%	54.2	45.8	10.3
Jr High	Freq.	14	20	34
	%	41.2	58.8	14.5
Sr High	Freq.	122	54	176
	%	69.3	30.7	75.2
Column total				
	Freq.	149	85	234
	%	63.7	36.3	100.0

However, the Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) levels of the jobs named by some have been classified much higher in the CCDO than anyone could reasonably expect to attain in that amount of time. The General Education Development (GED) levels are less of an issue as there is no necessary link between GED and SVP. It is true, however that work requiring higher levels of ability tends also to require longer periods of training, according to the CCDO. In this case, SVP and GED levels correlated .82.

Three explanations for this inconsistency can be suggested. First is that serious answers to the question were not given by some of the respondents, and of course, a small amount of this is expected in any survey of this type.

Two other plausible explanations can also be offered. First, possibly, the respondents genuinely did not know about the training requirements for some of the jobs. Almost all categories of service jobs have been

evolving toward requiring much higher standards of training. Therefore, the respondents may have actual knowledge of job holders with lower levels of training than would be required at the present time for job entry.

A second alternative explanation for the inconsistency is that CCDO classifications do not always accurately reflect the actual job requirements for training in specific instances. The training requirements to manage a department store are considerably different from the training requirements to manage a small confectionary, for example.

SECTION NINE

FIVE TO TEN YEAR OUTLOOK

The respondents were asked to provide the interviewers with some information on their longer-term outlook by looking ahead for five to ten years. Naturally, a question like this would not accurately portray long-term outcomes, but it could give insight into the general view taken of the future by the early leavers.

LONG-TERM EXPECTATIONS FOR WORK

Most respondents, 1009, or 79.3% of the total, believed that they would be working in 5-10 years. There were some gender differences in the responses: 13.2% of the males experienced some uncertainty about their employment prospects, but nearly twice that number of females (25.3%) said they did not know if they would be employed in 5-10 years time. It is possible that the females were commenting as much on the opportunities likely to be open to them as in their own decision to participate in the paid labour market. Very few of all the respondents (4.4%) said they would not be employed at all but hardly any males (six in total) said this (see Table 111).

Table 111
In 5-10 years time, will you be working?
Crosstabulated by gender
(N = 1272)

	Male	Female	Row total
Will be working			
Freq.	670	339	1009
%	84.8	70.3	79.3
Won't be working			
Freq.	6	21	21
%	0.8	4.4	4.4
Don't know			
Freq.	104	122	122
%	13.2	25.3	25.3
No response			
Freq.	10	0	10
%	1.3	0.0	0.8
Column total			
Freq.	790	482	1272
%	62.1	37.9	100.0

GENERAL CAREER OUTLOOK

When asked if they would be working in a long-term career type job, 921 persons responded. This was 88 persons fewer than the 1009 who had said that they expected to be working in five to ten years. In all, a total of 29.2% of those expecting to work either didn't know if they would be in a long-term career, or they did not respond at all when asked, perhaps reflecting a degree of uncertainty about either the future or the interpretation of the question. This lack of certainty in outlook was also seen in further analysis.

No gender differences of importance were observed among persons who expected to be working. In general, 62.7% of people of both genders expected their jobs to be long-term, career type jobs. This is particularly

interesting in view of possible differences in expectations for males and females where there could be an expectation that more males than females would have long-term career plans at this stage in life. While this expectation has been changing in recent years, it would still be the case that males would generally be expected to pursue a set of stable employment goals once they had left high school. The evidence of this question is that the males were as uncertain about the long-term as the females (see Table 112).

Table 112
If you will be working in 5-10 years time, will it be a long-term, career-type job? Breakdown by gender (N = 1009)

	Male	Female	Row total
Yes			
Freq.	426	207	633
%	63.6	61.1	62.7
No			
Freq.	54	27	81
%	8.1	8.0	8.0
Expected to be working, type of job not indicated			
Freq.	61	27	88
%	9.1	8.0	8.7
Don't know			
Freq.	129	78	207
%	19.3	23.0	20.5
Column total			
Freq.	670	339	1009
%	66.4	33.6	100.0

The respondents, who were considering their longer-term, five to ten year outlooks, were asked to judge if they expected to be working in seasonal work and collecting unemployment insurance. One third, 34% of the sample, answered affirmatively. An additional 28.3% said that they did not know, so fully 62.3% of all the early leavers in the survey were contemplating the possibility of dependence on unemployment benefits.

There was a significant gender difference, with females generally being less sure about their future dependence on UI than the males: 37.1% of the males felt that they would be dependent, compared to 28.8% of the females. About 36.7% of both the genders believed that they would not be dependent (see Table 113).

Table 113
In 5-10 years, will you work seasonally and collect unemployment insurance?
Breakdown down by gender
(N =1271)

	Male	Female	Row total
Yes			
Freq.	293	139	432
%	37.1	28.8	34.0
No			
Freq.	290	176	466
%	36.8	36.5	36.7
Don't know			
Freq.	198	162	360
%	25.1	33.6	28.3
No response			
Freq.	8	5	13
%	1.0	1.0	1.0
Column total			
Freq.	789	482	1271
%	62.1	37.9	100.0

There was a significant relationship between expectations of UI dependence, and expectations for a career type job. In general, those expecting a career type job did not expect to be UI dependent, although there were some exceptions. What is most intriguing about this analysis is that 287 of those expecting to be working in five to ten years time thought that they would be working at a "long term career type job" yet nonetheless were contemplating the possibility that the job would be

seasonal, and that they would have some dependency on unemployment benefits, that is, they either responded "yes" or "don't know" to expecting UI benefits. It is possible to take a cynical view of the apparent incongruity of this, but another view would be that the lack of experience in the work force, and the generally dark view of the job market that was taken by the respondent explained the inconsistent career outlook of this portion of the sample (see Table 114).

Table 114
Expectations for a long-term career, if expected to be working in five to ten years, contrasted to expected dependence on unemployment insurance
(N = 1009)

	Expect long-term career				
Expectation for UI	No response	Yes	No	Don't know	Row total
Yes	33 37.5	165 26.1	55 67.9	83 40.1	336 33.3
No	30 34.1	340 26.1	13 16.0	39 18.8	442 41.8
Don't know	24 27.3	122 19.3	12 14.8	82 39.6	240 23.8
No response	1 1.1	6 0.9	1 1.2	3 1.4	11 1.1
Column total	88 8.7	633 62.7	81 8.0	207 20.5	1009 100.0

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

The respondents who thought they would be working named a variety of different occupations when asked about the name of the job that they expected to hold in five to ten years time. About 22% said that they did not know what they would be doing, although they expected to be doing

something. For the most part the remainder listed the expected sorts of work. For example, 12.7% expected to be in service industries, another 4.9% thought they would be in fishing, and another 4.1% listed processing, probably associated with the fishery. Less than 1% thought that they would be in logging or forestry, 14.1% said they would be in construction and another 11.2% expected to be in product fabricating and repair (see Table 106 page 143).

When contrasting occupational expectations for the long-term with the shorter two to three year expectations, the major difference, as might be expected, can be seen to be in the higher numbers who are unsure about what they will be doing. To the extent that a trend seems to exist, it is in a change away from the traditional resource-based occupations into other areas. For example, almost 8% thought they would be in a processing occupation in the short term while in the longer term, about 4% of those who believe they will be working named processing as their occupation. This difference, though small, is significant.

SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL PREPARATION (SVP) REQUIREMENTS

While the respondents seemed to anticipate working in about the same occupational areas in the long term as in the shorter term, they seemed to anticipate upward mobility within these areas, certainly in terms of the level of training required for the jobs that they hoped to be holding. The trend appeared to be away from work requiring three months or less training, and into work requiring more than six months training. The most noticeable area of change was in the occupations requiring two to four years of specific vocational preparation. Twenty-four point two percent of those saying they believed they would be working in the long term, felt that they would be holding a job requiring this level of training. This represents a significant aspiration for people who had recently decided to terminate their formal secondary education, and it is not clear just how they viewed the process of attaining these goals.

SECTION TEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The early school leaver in Newfoundland and Labrador has emerged as an enormously complex and idiosyncratic person. School leavers are often stereotyped and these stereotypes were seen in the anaylsis. The early leaver was frequently male, had experienced failure in school, was disenchanted with school, and had no sense of direction or vision of the future that extended beyond the limits of his immediate home and community. However, the early leaver was also often female, though few said that they left school because they were pregnant.

High absenteeism at school was often reported. Most worked at temporary jobs when they worked, and they aspired to work that was traditional in their home areas. Some leavers had very definite ideas of where they wanted to go in life. A number had worked hard and continuously since school leaving. A significant number very quickly moved from home and the province.

The early leaver, we found, was a paradox. As a group, they seemed to recognize value in education. Indeed, many expressed aspirations that implied a need to make an important commitment to extensive education and training. They had, nonetheless, rejected public education, the first step in achieving their aspirations. Our challenge, as a society, is to understand this paradox, for it reflects us, and our way of thinking about education and its role in our lives. Early school leavers are a very significant part of our society. In their several ways, they reflect all our values, hopes and aspirations. Their problem, if that is what it is, must be seen as a problem of the society at large.

The early leaver's problem confronts everyone of school leaving age, without exception. All have to attach relevance to their school experience as they make decisions about their future, and the role that education is to play in it. All are bombarded with opinions about what are appropriate roads to take, political rhetoric about the economy, their entitlements and the futures of their communities. They live in environments that teach them survival skills and carry appropriately shaped perspectives on how education relates to those skills. Through all of this, they must shape a direction that will yield satisfying outcomes for them, outcomes that are not necessarily defined in terms of long-term career objectives, or attendance at school.

THE DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Reasons

The decision to leave school is based on a very broad spectrum of reasons. Persons leaving express their reasons in widely differing ways. It would be wrong to simplify the process. By far the largest set of reasons given related directly to the perception of the relevance of the educational experience. Many of the other reasons that were given make sense when viewed in this perspective, as well.

First, there are those who state that they see no purpose or relevance to the school experience. More commonly, however our respondents complained that school was uninteresting. The schools reported that the leavers lacked interest. Money, and their wish to become wage-earners, was the heart of the reasons given by others. There was little evidence, however, that genuine financial need was a problem. Most of the leavers received financial support from their parents, and continued this dependency after leaving school.

Some leavers said that they were needed at home. A few of the women said they were pregnant and that is why they left. These represent only a few of the many pregnancies reported for women in this age group. Perhaps a few pregnancies were the true reasons among those who reported illness, or personal reasons as the reason for leaving (more common for the women than the men), but the number of persons leaving because of pregnancy was confirmed, by and large, by the schools. This represents a change, since the Early Leaving report of the Denominational Education Committees, which targeted pregnancy as a major cause of school leaving. We have no evidence that the number of teen-age pregnancies has dropped. Rather, this information suggests that the more enlightened approach of schools in recent years to young women in this situation, and perhaps a change in societal attitudes, has made the fact of pregnancy a less compelling reason for school leaving, and requires us to look beyond pregnancy to explain why a decision to leave is taken.

School Failure

For the most part, failure in school does not seem to be a reasonable explanation for many decisions to leave, especially in the higher grades. The further advanced in school the early leavers were, the less likely they were to have failed, though many had failed at least once. At the higher levels, it was much less likely that the early leavers had a history of failure and more likely that they had experienced recent success.

Most early leavers had experienced failure sometime in their school experience. This confirms a stereotype, of course, but failure, especially if it occurred earlier in the school experience, didn't seem to be the real issue. Not many of the leavers we interviewed had left school after a successful school year. The data are not entirely clear on this point, and further analysis needs to be done, but at this time, the success of the immediate school experience seems to be a point to focus upon. As long as they were successful beyond school-leaving age, most of our leavers stayed in school. School programming which focuses on encouraging success may miss the point, however.

A pattern of absenteeism was described for many leavers the year of school leaving, and it is easy to attribute the lack of success that year to absenteeism. It is possible, however, that absenteeism is a consequence of a developing intent to leave. The lack of success in the same year could be as much a consequence of the same intent to leave as it could be a consequence of deficiencies in the schools' programs.

Significance of School

There is some evidence that while public education, that is high school, has been rejected by these people, they do nonetheless value education and training. The issue may be in their perception of the educational experience and the way that it relates to their lives, including its relevance to them .

Early leavers expressed a willingness to use the school, and consult teachers and counsellors on a variety of educational issues, but not many reported consulting any school personnel about the decision to leave. In effect, school might have had a place in their lives, but it was not seen by them to be relevant to the business of leaving, itself. This was an issue with broader implications, and they either dealt with the decision themselves, as befitted their approaching adult status, or consulted their parents, who they obviously considered best fitted to help them assess the full import of the decision.

Understandably, schools will have a biased viewpoint in a discussion about their relevance to the lives of individuals. Particularly in the rural areas, it is only in recent years that school has had a significant role to play in the career maturing of most people. It is still developing its role in many cases, and the options that school provides are largely unfamiliar. In many cases schooling will take the person out of the community, perhaps permanently. This is in contrast to past experience where people worked outside of the community, for the most part temporarily, and at jobs that could be learned locally.

Aspirations

Not many leave before the legal school leaving age. The legal school leaving age defines societal expectations for minimum school attendance. Beyond this, students are responsible for shaping their own lives, and in a society which tolerates widely differing aspirations and life styles, it is not surprising that a number of people choose a pattern that differs from the mainstream. We have to assume that early leaving provides satisfactions that are important to the leaver, and that they perceive expectations for continued satisfaction to be reasonable, regardless of mainstream opinion about the advisability of early leaving.

The aspirations of the early leavers reflect the reality that they have experienced. Most expect to be engaged in traditional work near their present homes. Some anticipate this work to be seasonal. Others are unsure about their future level of dependence on programs of income support. They foresee education that is job specific and limited in scope. Interpreted in the light of these aspirations, the public school experience can be interpreted as not particularly relevant.

This view of the future is at absolute variance with the view of the future that was taken by Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. The House Commission foresaw a Newfoundland economy of small local enterprises, using modern methods and

technology, fuelled by a work force well educated in generic, transferable skills. Having the work force in place was viewed as a necessary precondition to start the process of economic renewal. There was no evidence that our early leavers had an outlook even approaching this. To the extent that they perceived economic opportunity, they believed for the most part that this opportunity existed outside the province. One also assumes that they viewed this opportunity in terms of the traditional jobs and skills that they saw as they grew up.

Motivation

Motivation is a key issue as seen in the reasons cited by school and leavers for the decision to drop out. However, it is important to construe motivation correctly. Pedaguoges frequently view motivation in terms of interest in the content, and thus define motivation as an instructional problem in developing interest in the matter at hand. The problem is deeper than this, however. If school is not seen to be relevant, it will be difficult for teachers to create interest, assuming that it is possible to make the learning tasks interesting in the first instance. Some tasks in school may be both necessary, and dull and uninteresting. This is no different than other learning environments, such as working with someone on the job, as was preferred by the early leavers. There too, many skills are mastered through rote, repetitive, and monotonous tasks. Teachers, both in school and on the job, are well advised, of course, to make such tasks more engaging, but in the last analysis, skill may be best acquired by the person who is prepared to stick to the task.

An approach frequently applied to the problem of engaging the learner who appears at risk in the school is to make the learning "practical" by moving it into realistic job environments. Such approaches tend to work best with specific skills, and thus far, they have been applied to areas related to vocational skill development. Interestingly though, the approach is also applied with very young children just learning to read. Imbedding instruction in the immediate experience of children seems to help

considerably in facilitating learning to read, in developing memory skills, and so forth. This approach seems to work less well with much of the content which is now taught in upper levels of the school, and which is seen to be necessary if one is to move into the mainstream of the economy of the future, wherever it is located.

It is evident that the relevance of what is being taught is confounded with the way that it is taught. Very practical and immediate outcomes can also be achieved through direct application. The more generalizable, "generic" outcomes, are both more remote and less evidently relevant to a person, and are most usually taught in the classroom, away from settings in which they are applied. Furthermore, as the tasks being addressed become more akin to the direct experience of the person in the community, the need for school becomes less evident, and the reasons for staying in school, fewer.

This is a social and cultural phenomenon. If it is also seen to be a problem (as it has been) it is a social problem. The school can be part of the solution, maybe even the focus of the solution, but probably the school cannot provide the full solution. The solution must be addressed at the social and political level as well as at the educational level. There is every reason to believe that by the time a student can be reliably identified at risk for early leaving, it is already too late to do much in the school to alter the outcome. In fact, schools would probably be criticized if they targeted younger children on a more speculative basis. The emergence of the pattern of lower achievement, absenteeism, and alienation are likely signals that motivation for school is low, and we believe that this motivation is socially derived. For the school, the area of focus would appear to be in the transition from the more basic skill development of the lower grades to the more advanced content of the higher grades.

The problem is enormous. Young children must be provided with experience of a world that is foreign to them in such a way that it appears accessible and also desirable to enter. They need to be prepared to entertain massive change in their lives as a matter of course. The

necessity for this change has to be confronted, and accepted, in the family, the society, at the political level, and in the schools.

School Organization and Its Relationship to School Leaving.

The observation, during the sampling process, that there appeared to be fewer than usual reports of school leaving from schools organized K-7 and K-8 is interesting and should be followed up. There was other evidence that transition between schools was a problem, for example, the large group who reported school leaving during the Level I year.

A number of factors could contribute to these observations. Promotion practices may be a factor explaining the difference, and this could be associated with school type. This would be related to the makeup and changes in the peer group, a very important factor in the lives of people of this age group. Differences in instructional style, course content and the need to form relationships with new teachers and administrators are also factors that could be important.

VIEW OF THE HELPING PROCESS BY EARLY LEAVERS

The early leavers seemed to view helpers in different, and compartmentalized ways. There was no sense from the analysis that the leavers appreciated the intimate relationship between education and work and the need to integrate information in decision making. The people in our survey tended to focus on single sources of information or assistance, generally directly associated with the problem at hand. Thus, CEIC had a high profile in job hunting and school personnel in educational planning (other than dropping out). Parents were the people most involved with the school-leaving decision. This focus and reliance on single sources has

limitations which are probably not perceived by the early leaver, even though they probably appear highly credible.

Help in Deciding to Leave

The decision to leave school is a case in point. At this time, the available evidence seems to suggest that large numbers of persons leave school for social reasons, rather than academic reasons. It is probably a very personal decision, and many persons report leaving without consulting anybody. The older one is, the less likely one is to consult, although the trend is not pronounced. Apparently, parents are the persons most frequently consulted, when anyone is consulted at all.

Not much is known about the ways that parents influence the motivation and decision making of their children. Some evidence suggests that many parents do not feel equipped to advise their children, even though they generally hold high aspirations for them. They feel that their children must make their own decisions about schooling. In the case of persons who successfully graduate, this has been shown to be one of the factors differentiating persons who pursue post-secondary studies, and those who do not. This could very well be a factor in the early-leaving process, as well. Programming that is directed at the empowerment of parents to assist in the decision process might help to change some of the decisions now being made to leave school. Some consideration should be given to the desirability of this programming being rooted in the community, rather than in the school.

Help in Pursuing Educational and Occupational Planning

The tendency of the early leaver to pursue a single source of assistance in solving problems and making decisions has been noted already. The Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) has a very high profile in this regard. Many leavers seem to believe that it provides

a comprehensive program of assistance, even though it clearly does not. Similarly, many leavers say they will go to the community college for help in educational planning, even though, once again, community colleges are ill equipped to provide the comprehensive range of services that are required.

Part of the difficulty may be in the way that the leavers perceive their need. We suspect that these perceptions are in terms of the problems and decisions immediately at hand. They form a judgement about the availability of help based on their experience with the helpers that have been available to them in the community. Programming to put in place comprehensive planning and placement services, prepared to deal with out-of-school clients on a long term basis, might help to foster an awareness of the need to be proactive, rather than reactive. This is a service that would bridge the services now available in many schools, and in the Canada Employment Centres. This is a service that would be particularly helpful to those who have already left school, but is also a service that should become available to everyone approaching school leaving age.

SPECIAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The study encountered some difficulty in dealing with the issue of special education and work study programs. These are programs that schools have implemented to deal with special needs that have been perceived for some students. The nature of these needs are not all that clearly defined, but they have to do generally with low school achievement and its relationship to exceptionality of one sort or another. To some extent, they are also seen to be a way that the school can help the person who is potentially an early school leaver by preparing the person in a fairly direct way to enter the workforce.

The main point is that the people involved are treated as exceptional. Despite this, our evidence is that as a group, they were quite persistent in

school. They did finally decide to leave school, though generally at a point beyond school leaving age, and from programs that would not lead to graduation from public school in any case. Rather than a diploma, they are eligible for School Leaving Certificates, and since the people in our study had been named as early leavers, it may be assumed that they did not achieve even this status.

There are no criteria for attaining school leaving status, except perhaps, attaining the age of sixteen. From this viewpoint, none of the persons so classified in our study were genuine dropouts. While the policies are better now than they used to be, placement in these programs will generally be initiated by school authorities. Thus, it is obvious that attaining a diploma and avoiding being classified as a dropout is a socially and politically based objective that has been imposed rather arbitrarily. It may be that the case of the special education and work study students demonstrates a need to rethink the structure of education and the ways that people can move through the system.

SUMMER LEAVERS

The persons making the decision during the summer to leave school are a very interesting group and require further study and analysis. They differ from those who return to school following an unsuccessful school year, and as yet, there is no indication why this is so. Furthermore, some summer leavers have apparently enjoyed success in their previous school year. This implies a fundamental difference in the two groups of leavers that goes beyond school success.

The programming implications for the two groups are quite different. For the persistent group, providing or facilitating success experiences may be a key to keeping them in school. Success does not appear to be the key issue with the summer leaver, although it may be implicated. Further analysis of the data may yield insight into the problem of predicting summer leaving, which must be solved, if programs directed at these persons are to be accurately targeted and designed.

THE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER FROM LEVEL III

The most salient group of early leavers in our study were those who had reached Level III before withdrawing from school. The size of the group was not the only factor of interest. This group had also enjoyed the most school success of all the leavers surveyed. They had persisted in school the longest. They were the oldest of the early leavers, well beyond school leaving age. Again, further study and analysis is required to understand this group better. However, success and achievement would appear to be the focus of the problem. There are two puzzles about this group. One is the question of why they fail to succeed at this point after enjoying relative success earlier in their school careers. The other is the question of why they do not persist, having persisted thus far in school.

Achievement

One hypothesis is that large numbers fail to complete Level III because of the public examinations. Either they do not take the exams, or they fail them. A decision not to take the exams is a de facto decision to drop out. The decision may not be entirely in the hands of the students, either. Because of the implications of high failure rates, it may be that some students are discouraged from attempting the exams.

Failing the examinations implicates either the standards that had been set by the schools for these students in their work in the lower grades or the standards set by the public examinations. Either is possible, and both are avenues to pursue. It goes without saying that, within schools, standards that fail to properly prepare students for the exams should be improved by modifying the instructional programs. One possibility is that reduced standards have been applied to those perceived to be at risk for failure and possible early school leaving. This policy is shortsighted in that eventually the piper must be paid. The students who have received this consideration must eventually pass the independent assessment of the

public exams for which they are not then typically prepared. If anything, the impact of that failure can be predicted to be greater than failure in the school, and may have something to do with the failure of many to persist. School programming must present genuine instruction to the students at the requisite standard. There should be no compromise on this point, even though the instruction should take account of the learning characteristics of the students. Compromise on this point will obscure the problem and make it more difficult to resolve.

The appropriateness of the standards set by the public examinations are a different matter. It may in fact be the case that the school assessment of these students is the more appropriate. The validity and reliability of the examinations, and the way that results are reported all have a bearing on their usefulness in judging the attainments of students. These matters have hardly been investigated, and in particular, some students who fail the exams and leave, may represent special cases for whom the normal examination assumptions do not hold. Given up-to-standard instruction, the school marks should validate the exam marks, so when a group of previously successful students fail the exams, the performance of the examinations should be scrutinized as well as the performance of the students.

Nonacademic Factors

A set of other possibilities can be advanced which bear on the failure of the students experiencing difficulty in Level III to persist. One, mentioned earlier, is the possibility that the experience of failure, genuine or not, may prove too difficult for these persons to handle, and they may respond to the stress by withdrawing from the situation. Programs to immediately followup and support these persons while they marshall the personal resources to try again may be helpful.

Naturally, the problem is not likely to be that simple. In a population that is likely to question the relevance of the experience in any case,

failure may simply validate their assessment of the applicability of the school experience to their lives. Add to this, the possibility that they may have had no plans for post-secondary attendance, and it can be seen that motivation to persist would be quite low.

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